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ABSTRACT

A study examined how college students wrote a critique of a sociology article; which features of written critiques were valued most by professors in the discipline; and whether students' educational level and status predicted the quality of their critiques. Subjects, 32 students enrolled in an upper-level sociology course, read and responded by criticizing an assigned text in preparation for a classroom discussion. Written critiques were analyzed for the manner in which topics, comments, and support were configured and arranged. The critiques were also assessed for the types of evaluative commentary students made about topics, and for the textual transformations made when writing from the source article. A subset of five case study students completed additional tasks. Results indicated (1) overall, students' written critiques generally were well-organized; (2) students who selected fewer topics in their critiques developed the thematic chains in which the topics were embedded; (3) students were told to limit their critiques to two pages, which may have influenced their decisions to provide detail; (4) critiques that received the highest quality ratings provided predominantly negative commentary on the source article and backed it up with disciplinary sources of support; and (5) students who received the lowest quality ratings provided a summary of main points and personal sources of support. (Eight tables, two figures of data, a sample of classroom discourse, questionnaires, instructions for the reading-writing log, consent forms, a student critique, and instructions for rating critiques are attached. Contains 160 references. (RS)

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ED 367 987

FINAL REPORT

WRITING FROM ACADEMIC SOURCES

Project 9

Study 2, Phase 1
Authorship in Writing the Critique

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February, 1993

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Final Report

Project 9. Writing from Academic Sources
Study 2, Phase 1. Authorship in Writing the Critique

Written discourse is one way in which disciplinary knowledge is learned, shared, and evaluated. For example, scholars in a discipline regularly read the texts of others' in order to construct their own positions, dismantling and reconfiguring textual claims as they work to transform disciplinary knowledge. These positions are then reflected in the texts they create as authors--their contributions to extend or modify current understanding of a topic or issue. Similarly, many college assignments require that students read others' texts in order to write their own, to think through information to create their own positions, and to support these positions with convincing evidence. The role of readers who are also writers requires one to approach these tasks with a critical disposition, that is, with an ability to construct one's own perspective through the careful analysis and consideration of various, and sometimes competing, knowledge claims in a discipline. As a reader, one determines what information is valued, and how that information is positioned in relation to other information. As a writer, one learns to work upon ideas and share them with a community of readers.

When creating new texts from extant texts, readers-writers engage in discourse comprehension as they engage in discourse production. They perform what Bracewell, Frederiksen, and Frederiksen (1982) would call a "hybrid" act of literacy. They dismantle and reconfigure extant texts to create texts of their own, drawing as they work from various sources of knowledge (Spivey, 1990). Producing a unique text is a dynamic and complex constructive process in which readers who are writers make strategic use of what they bring to the task. Students' emerging texts reflect the relationship of their background knowledge, their knowledge of the topic under inquiry, their knowledge of the task requirements, and their own personal goals (e.g. Ackerman, 1991; Flower et al., 1990; Greene, in press; Kennedy, 1985; McGinley, 1992; Spivey, 1984, 1991; Spivey & King, 1989).

This study examines students' constructive processes as they comment upon another author's work--to write a critique that communicates where one stands in relation to particular knowledge claims. Critique is a process whereby critics authorize certain knowledge claims by sanctioning some information over other information, transforming existing accounts and making them relevant to the interests of a disciplinary community. As readers who are writers move from being students of a discipline to being professionals shaping a discipline, their texts must take on a certain authority. That is, students must demonstrate not only a mastery of knowledge, but the types of thinking that modify the body of knowledge that frame and drive a discipline. Critique, the focus of this research, is one type of discourse practice that openly invites students to work upon existing knowledge claims in a community.

Becoming Literate in a Discipline

One means of learning the ways of a discipline is through experiencing its literate practices. Doyle (1983) explains that academic "[t]asks influence learners by directing their attention to particular aspects of content and by specifying ways of processing information" (p. 161). Reading-writing tasks can be powerful tools for exploring topics and issues, tools that enhance students' ability to direct their own learning and engage in the types of thinking that further their understanding of information (McGinley & Tierney, 1989). This type of self-directed inquiry is required of students in the disciplines, who not only are expected to be accountable for newly acquired knowledge but are expected to apply that knowledge to diverse and relevant situations. Students engaging in literate practices, then, must go beyond what Resnick and Resnick (1988) call a "recitation literacy" and apply their knowledge of a discipline to the problems and issues they are asked to respond to in their courses. In giving assignments to students that involve the reading of texts, to produce texts of their own, instructors in higher education provide them opportunities to engage in some of the literate practices of a disciplinary community; these tasks stimulate students to think like authorities in the discipline, and to learn to produce texts that reflect what they do. Though students may not have the content or discursive knowledge required to contribute to a discipline in ways that experts do (Bartholomae, 1985), they are given such assignments as "professionals-in-training" (Woolvard & McCarthy, 1990). That is, particular tasks are assigned so that students can learn how to analyze and evaluate information, and how to articulate their own positions using the lines of reasoning that are considered legitimate in a discipline. In this sense, students learn that disciplines have unique "identity kits" (Gee, 1990) -- ways of "being-doing-thinking-valuing-speaking-listening(-writing-reading) Discourses" (p.174) that signify the discursive tenets that would enable them to participate as members of a particular discourse community.

Students learning the ways of a discipline must thus learn to conform to normalizing procedures, conventions in a discipline. The process of learning the ways of a discipline is not one in which the student is passive; while a community may influence thinking and development through the experiences it provides, information is appropriated uniquely by students. This is because students bring to a situation varying types of background information, topic knowledge, purposes, and goals that allow for individual interpretation and application of knowledge claims. Rogoff (1990) explains that "as individuals participate in social activity, they choose some aspects for attention and ignore others, and they transform what is available to fit their uses" (p. 197). In other words, knowledge in a discourse community is not transmitted, but rather is transformed through the constructive processes of students as they work through information to construct their representations of a discipline. Therefore, while disciplinary practices are driven by communal concerns, they are also individual acts as students learn to become authors in their own right.

As individual acts, literate practices reflect students' growing awareness of disciplinary knowledge--how students interact with texts, as well as how they produce texts of their own (Berkenkotter, Huckin, & Ackerman, 1988; Casanave,

1990; Spivey, 1990; Spivey, Mathison, and Greene, in preparation). Students must learn the content that makes a discipline unique among other disciplines. And they must also learn the discursive conventions associated with its epistemological frameworks. The reading and writing students do, then, need to reflect an understanding of the field--the issues and problems that are under discussion, the methodological approaches that are regarded as appropriate for inquiry, and the rhetorical moves that persuade. During this period of acquisition, students actively engage in negotiating and integrating prior knowledge and expectations with new information and ideas as they learn the ways of a discipline. This process is one that involves situating oneself within the discipline and entails the evaluation of new information based upon some type of existing criteria. Thus, students must learn to negotiate constraint and self at once, creating representations of knowledge that involve both social and individual choices.

Constructing Meaning through Texts

Authoring one text while reading another involves constructing a representation of the text one is reading for purposes of writing a subsequent text. To do so, readers who are writers organize, select, and connect information in particular ways to construct texts that are meaningful for them and their anticipated audience (Spivey, 1990). Research focusing on reading shows that people actively construct representations through the use of textual cues and their interpretation of context. Authors provide textual cues for content and form, and readers use those cues in building representations (Church & Bereiter, 1983; Kintsch & van Dijk, 1978; Meyer, 1975; Schallert, 1987). However, a reader's focus is guided by what van Dijk (1979) has termed relevance principles. Some of these guiding principles include the reader's goals, purposes, and background knowledge, including socially shared knowledge (Clark, 1985).

As readers construct representations of texts, they process information through creating macrostructures, elaborating upon them, and monitoring their understanding of their own comprehension or construction of meaning (Brown & Day, 1983; Kintsch & Van Dijk, 1978; Reder, 1980; Spiro, 1980). Part of this evolving text representation involves readers assuming critical stances at certain points. For example, in her study of first year students, Stein (1989) found that the majority of elaborations they made while reading were critical comments, evaluative statements concerning content. (Interestingly, many of these evaluative statements did not make their way into the students' written texts.) Other research on reading and the construction of meaning similarly demonstrates that readers assume stances with implied authors, assuming the role of critic, sometimes reading in a tug-of-war, sometimes praising and sometimes disagreeing with particular ideas in the text, while at other times being patient and suspending judgment (Haas & Flower, 1988; Norris & Phillips, 1987; Tierney, Lazansky, Raphael, & Cohen, 1987; Tierney & Pearson, 1983).

Research focusing on reading-to-write has shown that this process of interpreting texts to create texts is also influenced by the task, the rhetorical space in which readers and writers construct meaning. By rhetorical space, I mean the

potential textual spaces through which textual worlds (Beaugrande & Dressler, 1981) can be shaped by readers and writers as they infer and confer meaning on the texts they construct. Research to date has addressed the influence of the task on reading and writing on two levels. First, the task can invite a particular kind of reading and can invite writers to produce particular kinds of texts. Langer and Applebee (1987) found differences in the types of texts students produced when they were asked to write either an analytic essay or summary of a passage Students who were asked to write an analytic essay from a source text produced essays that focused on fewer, more integrated ideas from the source, whereas students asked to write summaries tended to write more broad-based accounts of the information. Durst (1987) found similar differences among students who were asked to complete an assignment under the same two conditions, analytic and summary writing. Think-aloud protocols showed that the task that invited analysis resulted in students inferring relationships among ideas as they read, whereas the summary task resulted in students looking more widely across the text for main points or ideas. Students completing the analytic task, however, did not write as they had read, and produced texts that were similar to those who were given the summary task.

Second, much depends on how a particular task is interpreted. In their study of undergraduate and graduate students, Flower et al. (1990) found that, depending upon their interpretation of task, students considered different task features when reading-to-write, producing individually unique essays. Among some of the essay features that differed were the degree to which writers relied on the source text, the types of strategies they applied to craft their texts, and the personal goals that influenced their reason/s for writing. Furthermore, as writers construct texts, their sense of task may change, and thus writers often revise and re-craft their emerging texts to accommodate these changing representations (Flower & Hayes, 1984).

Critiquing Texts in a Community

Constructing meaning through texts, building representations for oneself as well as for others, is a socially embedded process. LeFevre (1987) has pointed out that the intellectual choices individuals make are part of a larger ongoing process. Students learning the ways of a discipline develop their own positions, but those positions must conform to the valued standards of practice of a scholarly community. Thus, when students act on disciplinary information they must begin to think as people in that discipline might think, although their choices reflect characteristics unique to an individual.

Critique is one type of activity in which the individual evaluates evidence and weighs choices against already established disciplinary criteria and also weighs them using (more) personally unique criteria. In a discipline, critique appears to have some potential to determine what is valued, and by whom. According to Willard (1989), "The facts of sociality are integral to explanations of the meanings of claims and of the judgmental/veridical practices that authorize them" (p.16). Critique may illustrate what issues are at stake and how they are responded to by different members of a community. In this same vein, LaCapra (1983) claims that

much can be learned about a discipline from its book reviews and the journals in which they are published. To this end, critique may function to highlight areas of juncture, disjuncture, and rupture in a discipline, and illustrate the stances taken upon such positions. Critique points to areas of stasis in a discipline-- movement toward or away from currently held beliefs (Dieter, 1950).

In a discourse community, critique serves to regulate academic endeavors. Merton (1968), for example, identified four basic forms of science, one of which refers to the value of one's work as it relates to disciplinary practices. *Organized skepticism*, as he called it, allows for scientists' work to be made public among colleagues and scrutinized. In this manner, science is able to maintain its ethical standards, or ethos, ensuring rigor and honesty. Storer (1966) takes this notion of critique and generalizes it to all academic areas, noting, however, that the manner in which it functions differs according to the individual discipline. While one is encouraged to be creative, the community judges the worth of the end product, based upon its fit to convention. Other times, if the result does not seem valuable or within the realm of normal academic inquiry, it is disregarded, or the researcher is asked to go back and modify thinking to craft it more closely to disciplinary concerns (Myers, 1990). Thus, critique can serve to sustain an established order.

Another function of critique in discourse communities is its ability to alter or transform current views of knowledge by creating exchanges of interpretations. Lakatos and Musgrave (1972) point out the transforming nature of critique as they bring together various authors' interpretations of Kuhn's (1970) normal science and paradigm shifts. Critique, too, has been linked to shifts in thinking throughout different periods in history. For example, Grube (1965) provides an account of how Greek and Roman philosophers and rhetoricians modified each others' views and theories as a result of critique. A more recent treatment of critique is presented by Eagleton (1984), who discusses its changing function from eighteenth century England through contemporary times. Eagleton claims that literary criticism today serves not to problemetize social issues, and he calls for a renewed interest in Habermas' (1962) "public sphere." Eagleton himself becomes a critic of critique. The above examples indicate that, in some sense, critique may be considered to act in a generative manner.

While critique has been studied and theorized about at a level of disciplinary practices, it has not been examined at the student level, where persons becoming knowledgeable in a discipline are learning to situate themselves among the multiple perspectives and issues within a particular community. That is the problem addressed in this report. Assignments in disciplinary classes have sometimes been viewed as a means to socialize students into the ideology of the discipline in which they are writing. In such cases students learning the discourse of a discipline are often portrayed in a rather passive role conforming to conventions of the community (Bartholomae, 1985). But what happens when students are invited to actively analyze and evaluate material in a discipline and to critique theoretical issues? How do students manage the complexity of transforming texts as they are learning the discourse of a discipline? What strategies do they invoke when reading to write for other readers as critics? For

example, what information becomes salient for commentary? What stances do students assume with an author? How do students configure their commentary in forms that assume authority for disciplinary relevance?

Commenting on Topics

When readers who are writers critique a source article, the text that is being critiqued becomes the topic about which the readers comment as they create their own written texts. Viewing a text as the topic, or focus of inquiry, is a "time-hallowed" activity, according to Rabin (1986), who says that critique is practiced in almost all cultures in which writing has played a social role. Critiquing is discourse about discourse; critics evaluating the texts of others bring standards of appropriateness to the task and thus evaluate a text against some set of standards. In some cases, a text may be evaluated along the lines of existing standards. In other cases, however, standards may be questioned or reinterpreted, applying other relevant criteria to the situation. In such cases existing standards are transformed and constructed anew. Says Rosenfield (1968):

> The critic's commentary is analogous to that of the trial lawyer who bases claims as to the proper verdict in a case on his interpretation of the facts in light of some legal code. He [sic] may on the other hand feel that the law hurts his case. In that event he could propose a new interpretation of the laws which does more justice to the position he is defending; or if his mind functions after the fashion of an Erskine, he could seek to "make law" by questioning the established norms and attempting either to amend them or to substitute a code of his own choosing as the standard of evaluation. (p.55)

The role of the critic as rhetor is to bring to bear all available and relevant information in defending a claim or position, whether it is consistent with existing standards or is counter to them. The text as an object of critique does not change so much as the approach to it does, allowing it to be viewed from a different vantage, thus inviting a novel understanding or interpretation. This transforming nature of critique is an effort to direct readers' attention to information in ways that might demonstrate the text's applicability to a community, given its members' background, expectations, or interests. It is a task that presents a text as it might be currently relevant to a community. The text may be viewed and evaluated in its present situation (Rabin, 1986). Critique must elucidate a text and reveal it to a public, who can then go in and evaluate the text for themselves.

The process of critique is one in which particular information is selected for commentary and comments are made about it. The information about which the critic comments is the commentatum, or *topic*, and the critic's response to a topic is the commentary, or *comment*. These two--topic and comment--form the basis of critique. This topic-comment pattern is similar to what Grimes (1975) and Meyer (1975) have called a response pattern; the text that is constructed is built upon topics found in the source text, but new material or information is included as well.

In other words, there is some type of overlap between the original text and the subsequent text that is written in response to it. Unlike the response pattern, though, a topic-comment pattern does not require the posing of a problem and its solution. Rather, the topic-comment pattern is contingent upon the selection of topics about which the author chooses to comment.

According to Rosenfield (1968), the selection of a topic and its comment influence the "nature and function" (p. 57) of the reasons produced in critical discourse. A critic's choice of topic, comment, and the reasons produced for an evaluation allow for the construction of unique textual configurations. What this means is that a critic transforms a source text by virtue of the treatment he/she believes the text warrants--by the particular topics selected for commentary, by the evaluative comments made about those topics, and by the reasons for which those critical judgments were made.

The types of patterns authors use as they work to construct their own texts may help to illustrate the goals and strategies writers invoke to fulfill a particular task. While certain types of tasks seem to invite certain configurations of material (Spivey, 1991), authors construct meaning and create texts to meet their own discourse goals. The texts they produce reflect what they bring to the task. "The reading, thinking, interaction with people or events, including the communicator's previous experiences, all openly or subtly play for inclusion and primacy in what is to be uttered [written]," says Baird (1965, p. 172). Thus, the textual patterns critics construct as they evaluate another author's text reflect how they have approached the task of critique, for example, as a supporter of information or as an agent of change. Meeting discourse goals often involves not replicating a text verbatim, but selecting parts of it and organizing them for one's own purposes. Here, invention and arrangement work in unison to produce subsequent texts.

When critics of texts appeal to an audience today, they are, to some degree, invoking aspects of classical strategies related to invention and arrangement. Invention and arrangement, two of the five canons of rhetoric, were sometimes discussed under the same rubric in classical treatises (Carrino, 1959; Corbett, 1990). The rhetor's task was to decide what information could be brought to bear on the subject using the *topoi* as a heuristic, and in what order that information should be presented. The focus was not on the parts of a speech per se (the details), but on how the configuration of parts could create a persuasive whole. Similar persuasive strategies are relevant today. While evaluating the whole of a source text critics must, according to convention, attend to its parts, assessing and providing reasons for their critical judgments (Brock, Scott, & Chesebro, 1990; Leff, 1986). In so doing, authors analyze, evaluate, dismantle, and build. As critics foreground some aspects of a text and background others, they take on the tasks of "massing and shaping, expanding, contracting, proportioning and emphasizing, coloring and toning" (Wagner, 1944, p. 289). In this instance, as student authors in a particular discipline take an author to task.

Scope of the Study

The purpose of this study is fourfold. First, it examines how students transform the text of another to construct their own perspective on an issue as they critique. Second, it examines the features of the texts students construct to determine what, in fact, makes for a quality critique. Third, it examines the assumption that students who are studying to become members of the discourse community for whom the task is assigned are more enabled as they perform it. And last, through the analysis of 5 case-study students it provides a more in-depth account of the strategic nature of students scholarly decisions as they read-write.

Rationale for the Study

One of the goals of undergraduate education is to teach students the ways of a discipline, to provide them a sort of intellectual apprenticeship that allows them to successfully perform in their area of scholarly expertise. One aspect of this apprenticeship is the acquisition of discursive forms, the literate practices of the community. Students must learn to produce the different genres indicative of a discipline, and to produce them demonstrating a knowledge of rhetorical space. Students must learn how to organize, select, and connect information in ways appropriate to how disciplinary information is communicated to a public. In other words, students must learn the text conventions that define the discursive frameworks through which knowledge claims are presented. In physics, for example, findings are reported in the introduction, whereas in educational psychology, it is common practice not to disclose results until later in a journal report (Swales & Najjar, 1987). Authors must also support their positions or views using standards of evidence that are appropriate to a community. What constitutes evidence may vary across fields (Bazerman, 1988), or may vary within a field (Edmondson, 1984; Herrington, 1985). Thus, learning to be literate in a discipline requires one to configure and place information according to established standards.

At the same time students are learning the literate practices of a discipline, they are appropriating its information for their own uses as they gradually construct their professional and authoring identities (Spivey, Mathison, & Greene, in prep.); they use the texts of others to construct their own texts. Yet, to date, we know little about the types of textual transformations students make as they construct texts of their own. To further our understanding of how undergraduate students approach literate practices we need to examine how they transform source texts for their own purposes and how their transformations are evaluated within the community of scholars for whom their assignments are directed. For example, in the case of critique, how do students position themselves with the ideas in the source text, a task critique explicitly invites? What TOPICS do students find salient for commentary, what type of evaluative COMMENTS do they make about those TOPICS, and how do they provide convincing SUPPORT for the stances they take? Do some configurations of TOPICS, COMMENTS and SUPPORT signal critique more than other configurations? And are some types of configurations valued over others?

Studies in discourse synthesis have shown that, for example, descriptive texts tend to be collections of reporting of information form a source text and that those judged to be of better quality are more tightly organized, more elaborate, and more connected (Spivey, 1983, 1984; Spivey & King, 1989). Yet, in another type of discourse, the comparison text, students have options about how to organize information, either using macro-level aspects by which to arrange information or comparing aspects case by case (Spivey, 1991). In that study, students who chose to organize their texts using macro-organizers, or larger chunks of information that subsumed smaller chunks of information received higher quality ratings on their texts. Greene (1993) found in his study of students writing in the discipline of history that their responses to different tasks signaled two types of configurations--a problem-based essay and a report, with those writing the former including more overall content. What about critique? What information do students select? How is it configured? And how do those configurations conform to disciplinary criteria?

Equally important, how do students make their own perspectives relevant to the disciplinary community for whom such texts are addressed when they themselves are learning its ways of knowing its forms of expression? Will students who are studying to become members of the discourse community perform better, given that they are more familiar with the ways of knowing in a discipline? Or, is critique a task that is not tied specifically to a discourse community, but rather to a set of features that indicate a critical disposition, which may be acquired throughout years of schooling? For example, Ackerman (1989, 1991) had two groups of graduate students--in psychology and in business--write on a topic that was in their area of expertise and on a topic out of their area of expertise. He found that students writing in their area of expertise were less text-based and brought in more knowledge from outside the source texts, and they were more aware of the rhetorical contexts in which their texts were situated. Yet, students writing on a topic outside their discipline also demonstrated qualities of the experts' writing but to a lesser degree. Might we expect the same with undergraduates--those writing in their area of study and those writing outside of it?

Finally, in order to provide a better understanding of students' constructive processes as they critique, a subset of readers-writers completed additional tasks, including a think-aloud protocol. As students construct a representation of the source text for purposes of constructing their own written critique, they elaborate upon and evaluate information, choosing to include some of their commentary in their written texts in order to meet their discourse goals and choosing to exclude others. Through the use of on-line measures, students constructive processes are traced over the course of reading-writing. What types of negative commentary do students include in their critiques? Which ones do they leave out?

This study examines one common type of literate practice, the writing of critique, as student authors becoming knowledgeable in a discipline -- sociology-- are invited to evaluate another author's material. Critique is valued as a means whereby students can go beyond learning by rote and demonstrate a more comprehensive understanding of disciplinary information. In their survey of college and university faculty, Bridgeman and Carlson (1984) found that

"[a]nalyzing and criticizing ideas, excerpts or passages is rated as a particularly important skill for undergraduates" (p. 263). A study of critique as it functions in situ can provide valuable insights into how students appropriate information within disciplinary communities (for other uses of critique, see Posner, 1980).

A study of critique in sociology appears to be a natural starting point for a study of the "hybrid" task of critique. First, research in the discipline demonstrates an interest in having students develop a critical awareness of the issues and problems related to sociological topics (Mayer, 1986; Schwegler & Shamoon, 1991). Second, writing plays an important role in the lives of sociologists, as well as in the lives of students of sociology (Becker, 1986; Casanave, 1990; Edmondson, 1984; Selvin & Wilson, 1984).

Questions Guiding the Study

To examine critique as an individual and social process, the study examines the critiques of students who are learning the ways of the discipline of sociology. This research examines how different students performed the task and it also examines how their written texts were evaluated by sociologist applying disciplinary criteria. Specifically, this study addresses the following questions:

1. How do students perform the writing of a critique?

    a) What types of organizational patterns do their written critiques reflect?

    b) What types of evaluative COMMENTS do they make about the TOPICS on which they focus their critiques?

    c) What type of SUPPORT do they use to substantiate their judgments?

    d) What types of TEXTUAL TRANSFORMATIONS do they include in their texts?

2. What features of written critiques are valued most by professors in their discipline?

3. How well do students' educational level and status as a major or non-major predict the quality of their critique ratings?

4. Are there commonalties across students in the kinds of COMMENTS made when reading that do not appear in their critiques?

Overview of Research Procedures

This study was conducted in a naturalistic setting at a large public university. Thirty-two students enrolled in an upper level sociology course read and

responded by writing a critique to an assigned text in preparation for a classroom discussion. Students had one week in which to complete the assignment. Like many college assignments, this one required them to work on their own time outside of the classroom.

Written critiques were analyzed for their CONFIGURATION, that is the manner in which TOPICS, COMMENTS and SUPPORT were configured and arranged. Texts were also assessed along the lines of their CRITICAL DIMENSION, that is for the types of evaluative COMMENTARY students made about TOPICS, the types of SOURCE OF SUPPORT they used to back their COMMENTARY on TOPICS, and for the TEXTUAL TRANSFORMATIONS they performed when writing from the source article.

Students' written critiques were read and rated individually by four sociology professors, one of whom was the instructor for the course. Interviews were then conducted with each professor to elaborate upon the criteria they had applied in rating the students' critiques. Features that constituted a good critique were determined through examining relationships between text variables associated with organization and critical dimension and the professors' summed ratings. The written critiques were examined further by exploring the relationship between the professors' summed ratings and a student's educational level (i.e., first, second, third or fourth year) and whether or not she or he was majoring in sociology. This information was collected from all students prior to their completing the course.

To investigate the knowledge and criteria readers who are writers draw upon as they compose their critiques, a subset of 5 case-study students completed additional tasks as they worked in the classroom and as they worked in their own reading-writing environment. These tasks included questionnaires, knowledge forms, think-aloud protocols, reading-writing logs, discourse-based evaluations, and interviews. Questionnaires provided a demographic profile of each student and supplied information on his or her background in sociology. Knowledge forms provided a means by which to determine how much students knew about the discourse topic of the article that they were critiquing. Think-aloud protocols provided data from which to determine which critical insights students included in their written critiques and which were edited out. The reading-writing logs provided an account of students' time on task. And discourse-based evaluations provided insights into the characteristics students believed made their texts weaker or stronger. Students elaborated upon their evaluations in an interview and also responded to questions about critique and the role it plays in sociology. SAT verbal scores were also collected for case-study students.

This study contributes to research of the "hybrid" literate practice of discourse synthesis--how students interact with texts with the goal of producing texts of their own. Because of its focus on one particular instance of critique, this study does not propose a definitive account of the constructive processes of students as they construct critiques using other types of texts in different disciplines, or using multiple texts. Rather, it serves as a point of departure for subsequent research by opening up the area for further inquiry and by providing a methodology that allows for the study of critique with other texts and in other disciplines.

Method

This study examined the written texts of undergraduate students as they authored one text in response to the text of another author. The task, the writing of a critique, required students to evaluate an issue in the discipline of sociology. The writing of a critique requires critics to apply their own, (more) personally unique perspectives and criteria and to draw from what they know of an already established framework. In other words, while students are expected to express their own individual concerns, in support or against a source text, they are also accountable for disciplinary ways of knowing. The goal of this research was to better understand how students achieve such a rhetorical balance in their disciplinary texts, addressing individual concerns, while at the same time speaking to issues within a larger disciplinary framework.

The approach to this study was multi-faceted, examining both students' products and processes as they performed their task under the conditions in which many students would be required to produce written texts in a university setting. First, students' texts were analyzed, using methods of discourse analysis that described the configuration of TOPICS and COMMENTS students used to produce their written critiques. The study also examined the types of COMMENTARY students made about the TOPICS they selected for COMMENTARY and the SOURCE OF SUPPORT they used to provide convincing evidence for that COMMENTARY. In addition, students' critiques were studied for the types of TEXTUAL TRANSFORMATIONS they used when working from the source article to construct their critiques. Second, this study locates students' decisions as readers who are writers in the rhetoric of the discipline in which their efforts were targeted--their texts were rated by various sociologists who elaborated upon their judgments, thus providing a sketch of what constitutes a quality critique. In addition, the study examined the quality of students' critiques to determine if indicators such as status of major and nonmajor, and educational level predicted quality performance.

Although the major thrust of this study was to explore the textual performance of critique, it also examined a subset of 5 case-study students as they worked to complete the assignment. Specifically, this was done to examine how their positions or alignment with the source text may have changed throughout the process of constructing their critique. Comparisons of the COMMENTARY students focused on as they worked through the source text in order to construct their own text were made to determine the types of COMMENTARY students chose to include and exclude in their written critiques. Case-study students also completed tasks that allowed for profiles of them to be constructed, permitting glimpses of how their individual experience may have influenced the writing of their critiques.

Combined, these paths of analysis provided a composite image that is useful in understanding some of the features of a thoughtful, well-written critique, as well as providing insights into how to teach this unique and important task.

Setting

The study was conducted in a course offered through the Sociology Department at a large public Mid-Atlantic university. The course, *The Sociology of Religion*, serves to fulfill a degree requirement for an upper level elective in the discipline. The course is open to students throughout the university; there is no prerequisite for the class. According to the class syllabus, the course was designed to *introduce students to the ways sociologists think about and understand religion* (my emphasis). The syllabus explains:

> Religion has frequently played a very important role in society and in individuals' lives. The sociological perspective focuses on the human (especially the social) aspects of religious belief and practice. In this course we will concentrate on religious trends in the United States. A central theme of the course is the relationship between modernity and religion.

Discussion of content in this classroom was closely tied to how sociologists might think, reason, and argue about issues. In the very early days of the semester the professor of the course allotted 45 minutes of a class period to examine what the world might look like peering through "sociological lenses," as she put it. By the end of the discussion, a description was written on the blackboard. According to the professor, a sociological framework consists of particularities related to:

- A systematic way of studying a field
- Assumptions--what to look at and the questions it asks
- Groups shaping individual behavior

To help students learn to think like sociologists, classroom discussions were often handled in a Socratic fashion, with the teacher asking questions and students responding to them. The type of questions asked, however, were generally first centered around content to determine if students understood the material. Once it was established that class members had a handle on the information, questions would progress to those concerning issues and their implications, which ultimately resulted in a classroom discussion. Students were not taught explicitly to critique, but the teaching style could be viewed as a type of model for verbal critique (for an illustration of classroom discourse, see Appendix A).

Writing assignments for the course included a midterm and final exam and two short essays, one of which is the focus of this study. This essay was a critique of an article assigned for class. To some extent, the professor modeled the thinking she expected to see reflected in the short essays, although she did this more directly for the first assignment. The first task was to read the novel *The Bread Givers* by Anzia Yezierska and to tease out the tension between tradition and modernity. For this assignment she told students that the question she gave them was basically how she wanted them to be thinking about the book. She wrote on the board:

> In what ways do we see the clash between tradition and modernity in this book? Where does "religion" fit in? What other dualities are evident in this book?"

Students broke into discussion groups and reported back to the class, providing examples of "dualities" and how they were worked out in the novel. During the discussion, issues arose concerning traditional groups and the erosion of the social structures that maintain their cultural power base. For such groups, secularization, which focuses more on individual agency, may threaten group identity.

Two weeks prior to the second writing assignment, the critique, the teacher spent an entire class period demonstrating the analysis of a text that dealt with the topic of the limits of modernity. The goal of this exercise was to get at the author's "basic argument," moving point by point through the major premises of the article, to do a sort of rhetorical reading (cf. Haas & Flower, 1988). Specifically, the professor asked students to focus on:

> Why is he writing this article? What concerns is he thinking about? What are his concerns in writing this article?

The professor guided the students as they made sense of and analyzed the author's major claims. Students provided an overall evaluation of the article but did not explicitly tie their criticisms back to the text. This may have been because the critical discussion immediately followed the group's close textual analysis; students may have felt that the material to which their criticisms referred had already been identified. Specifically, many of the students found the conclusion of the article wanting because it oversimplified the problem and suggested a reductive solution.

During both class periods in which writing assignments were modeled, an emphasis was placed on a close reading of the text. In the case of the first assignment, special attention was given to the role of concrete examples or evidence in addressing complex issues. In the second case, discussion centered around the author's credibility due to the conclusion in respect to the issue.

Participants

Participants in the study were 32 of the 35 students enrolled in the course. Three students were absent on the day consent forms were issued, and thus permission was not granted to analyze their critiques. Twelve of the participants were majors in sociology. Other participants were majors in such diverse fields as liberal studies, political science, philosophy, and religious studies, to name a few. Of the 32 participants, 19 were seniors, 7 were juniors, 3 were sophomores, and 3 were freshmen. Thus, all undergraduate educational levels were represented. All students in the class provided information concerning their level of education and whether or not they were a sociology major. The 32 participants in the study received $5 for providing their critiques for analysis and for completing an educational status questionnaire.

A subset of 5 students, all female, completed additional tasks as they worked on the assignment, including a questionnaire, a knowledge measure, a reading-writing log, a think-aloud protocol, a discourse-based evaluation, and an interview. These case-study students were selected based upon their educational level and willingness to complete additional tasks. Background information collected on case-study students included their grade point average, the number of sociology courses completed prior to their enrolling in the course, and their SAT verbal scores. These students received an additional $20 for their participation, for a total of $25.

Materials

For purposes of clarity, materials for all students are described first, followed by those related only to the case-study students.

Source text. The source text for the study was a scholarly article from an edited volume, *In Gods We Trust* (Robbins & Anthony, 1991). The text deals with a topic that is part of the curriculum for the course, in particular, aspects of tradition and modernity in people's religious lives. The article, "On the Margins of the Sacred" by Larry R. Greil and David L. Rudy, challenges standard definitions of religion with an alternative definition of religion-- quasi-religion. Quasi-religions call the traditional Judeo-Christian approach to sociological religious theory into question and offer an alternative view of what counts as religion. The authors claim that current approaches to religion are objectivist in intent and believe that in order for someone to be religious, she or he must believe in a transcendent world. They claim that a proper definition of religion should be subjectivist and based not on predetermined categories but on what an individual believes is religious. Greil and Rudy advance their position by providing examples of quasi-religious organizations and groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Transcendental Meditation that function, in their eyes, as religions because they fulfill the spiritual needs of people in a contemporary, secularized society. The authors claim that traditional religions do not serve the needs of a modern society.

This novel definition departs from currently held definitions of religion in the field and thus the critique assignment serves to make students think through the concept and determine its value as an approach to understanding religion. The article invites, but is not limited to, student critique along the lines of theory and methodology. It is 13 pages and approximately 14,000 words in length.

The semantic content of the source text was parsed into content units adapting Witte's (1983) procedure for analyzing the topical structure of texts and Shuy's (1982) topic-comment analysis of discourse. Combined, these two approaches provided a framework for constructing a template of the source text.

The method of analysis used the TOPIC of a sentence as the unit to chart the directionality of information in a text. The TOPIC of a sentence is not necessarily the grammatical subject of a sentence, but rather, functions as the focus of the discourse. For Witte (1983), a TOPIC is, broadly defined, "what the sentence

is about." (p. 314). Shuy (1982), in his topical analysis of discourse, followed the frameworks of topic-comment analysis described by Chafe (1972) and Kates (1980). In these cases, a TOPIC was not defined by "grammatical relations of the terms" (p. 114) but by content and logic. Both definitions of TOPIC are similar to those that other researchers have used to study the development of discourse throughout a text (i.e., Giora, 1979; van Dijk, 1979).

Witte's procedure, based on the work of Mathesius (1928) and other linguists of the Prague School (e.g., Danes, 1974), provides a means by which the semantic relationship of individual sentence TOPICS to the text's controlling theme, or *discourse topic*, as Witte calls it, can be described. Says Witte (1983): "The particular *sentence topics* which appear in a text probably result directly from the writer's implicit sense of the *discourse topic* and from the writer's decisions about how to make the *discourse topic* accessible to the reader" (p. 318). Shuy (1982) believes that, "[b]y mapping the topics . . . . one can obtain a macro picture of one aspect of the structure. . . . which highlights the cognitive thrust of its direction" (p. 115).

While Witte (1983) was primarily interested in using TOPIC to study *discourse topic* development, Shuy (1982) applied both TOPIC and COMMENT to depict the flow of the total discourse, that is, not only what TOPICS were brought up for conversation, but how they were responded to. Thus, the term COMMENT refers to that which is said about the TOPIC, or can be thought of as a response to a TOPIC. Together, these two discursive components, TOPIC-COMMENT, allow for a study of the distribution of information throughout a text and chart the flow of responses to that information. (For the source text template parsed in the manner described above, see Appendix B.)

For this study, the size of the content unit was based on an informativity principle adapted from Spivey (1984). In order to qualify as a content unit, a TOPIC-COMMENT (T-C) sequence had to provide a positive answer to the following question: Can this T-C sequence stand as a complete informative sentence in a text? A content unit had to be broad enough to allow for a mapping of its relationship to the discourse topic yet specific enough to represent its different treatment at various points in a text. Take, for example, the sentence: "It will be immediately obvious that it is impossible to define quasi-religions without coming first to an understanding about what we mean by religion." To meet the criterion of informativity, the TOPIC would have to include not only the key term QUASI-RELIGION, which would be too broad, but the term DEFINITION as well, in order to provide a more qualified focus. The COMMENT, or what is said about the TOPIC, would include the information that is about the TOPIC. Thus, the above sentence would become the following content unit:

(T) Quasi-religion-definition
(C) Is contingent upon a definition of religion

In some cases, the same TOPIC, (for instance, QUASI-RELIGION-DEFINITION) may change focus in a text. To address this different treatment,

another descriptor would be included in the TOPIC to reflect this shift. For example, the TOPIC of the sentence, "Thus, one possible use of the term "quasi-religion" would be to effect a compromise between supporters of substantive definitions of religion and supporters of functional definitions of religion," is, on a broad level, QUASI-RELIGION-DEFINITION. But to specify this TOPIC further, (1) would be added to illustrate that a first working definition of the term has been given. The TOPIC-COMMENT sequence would be:

(T) Quasi-religion-definition (1)
(C) Is a compromise between substantive and functional supporters' views

Later on in the text, a second working definition is given, and this is represented as QUASI-RELIGION-DEFINITION (2). Thus, key terms of one TOPIC may be embedded within other TOPICS. The total number of content units from the source text was 216.

All together there were 5 TOPICS that were discussed in the source text at 5 different levels of detail. The lower the level, the more detail about the TOPIC. For example, 2 TOPICS, QR and O-QR were the main focus of a sentence at some points, but at other points in the text they were discussed at a more detailed level, with SUBTOPICS such as definition or ideological ambiguity providing more in-depth information about the focus of the TOPIC. As Table 1 shows, there were 41 different combinations of TOPICS and SUBTOPICS in the source text, with the majority of them concerning quasi-religious organizations.

Table 1

TOPICS and Levels of SUBTOPICS in Source Text*

1 TOPIC	2	3	4	5
1. QR				
	D			
	D	(1)		
	D	(2)		
2. O-QR				
	sh	AA		
	sh	CF		
	p	est		
	c	SFF		
	na	X		
	na	L		
	na	TM		
	F			
	G			
	ITO			
	IA			
	RL	v	N	
		v	CL	
		v	NN	
		v	M	
		v	J	
		g	P	
	NRL	v	M	
		v	NN	
		v	B	
		v	J	
	S			
	I			
3. R	D			
	D	f		
	D	s		
	D	f	v	
	D	f	g	
	D	s	v	
	D	s	g	
	D	am		
	D	s	f	E
	D	t		
	D	b		
4. K	D	am		
5. NK	D	am		

* for a list of abbreviations and their meanings see page 22.

Educational status questionnaire. All students filled out a brief questionnaire consisting of two questions. The first was to have students mark their year in school (first-year, second year, third year, or fourth year). The second question asked students to mark whether or not their field of study was sociology (see Appendix C). This information provided information on their educational status and their status of major or non-major.

In addition to these two kinds of materials, case-study students had the following materials.

Case-study questionnaire. Case-study students provided demographic data by completing a brief questionnaire consisting of 13 questions. Questions pertained to their view of the discipline of sociology, the number of sociology courses they had prior to entering this particular course, the types of writing they may have encountered in other sociology courses, and their reason for taking the course (see Appendix D). This qualitative information provided descriptive information from which to construct demographic and disciplinary profiles of the students.

Knowledge form. Case-study students were given a knowledge form that consisted of three concepts, each on a separate page (see Appendix E). The three concepts were selected by the researcher from the article and agreed upon by the instructor of the course, who felt that the terms selected best represented the knowledge students would need to understand the assigned article. The three concepts were: 1) Substantive Definition of Religion, 2) Functional Definition of Religion, and 3) Quasi-Religion.

Reading-writing log form. Case-study students were given a reading-writing log. The log was three pages. Directions for filling out the form were on the first page along with a list and explanation of the types of activities they were to mark down. A model of a log was also included on the first page. Students were told to record on the log every time they worked on the assignment. The activities they were to record included talking to someone, making notes on the article, drafting part of the critique, revising, or thinking about the topic, to name a few. Space was provided on the other two pages for students to note the day they worked, the amount of time they spent in hours and minutes, the activities they worked on, and a brief explanation of the activity (see Appendix F).

Written instructions for discourse-based evaluations. Once they completed writing their texts, case-study students read the directions for the discourse-based evaluation. They were told to read their critiques twice--the first time through to get a sense of their texts and the second time to pay attention to the parts of their texts that they thought made their critique stronger or weaker. They were instructed to mark a (+) by the strong and a (-) by the weaker parts. Next, they were told to take out their tape recorder, make sure it was working, and then to look back at the places they indicated on their critiques and explain how these places made the critique stronger or weaker (see Appendix G).

Data Collection Procedure

As was explained earlier, the design of this study examined the critiques of undergraduate students from various pathways-- in the texts they produced, through the thought processes they exhibited as they read/wrote, and by the responses to their efforts by the rhetorical community of sociology. Data collection procedures are described below in the order in which they occurred.

Data collection took place during the winter semester of 1992. The researcher was introduced to the class on the first day of the semester by the course instructor. Students were told that she would be sitting in on the course for the duration of the semester collecting information about the writing students do in sociology. In the fourth week, the researcher spoke with the class and provided more detail about the study and asked students if they would be willing to participate. The researcher explained that participants would complete several tasks in conjunction with their writing the critique, which was a course assignment. At that time five students, who became the case-study students, agreed to participate in the full study. Consent forms were signed by the case-study students at this time (see Appendix H) .

That same class session the case-study students were given the Case-Study Questionnaire. Students completed it outside of class and on their own time. They returned the questionnaire at the next class meeting.

During the seventh week of the semester the researcher again spoke with the class and asked all students to allow the researcher to analyze their written critiques. It was explained that students who agreed would provide a copy of their critique to the researcher but would complete no additional tasks, with the exception of a brief Educational Status Questionnaire. At this point, 27 additional students agreed and a second, adjusted consent form was signed by these participants (see Appendix I).

The week before the task was assigned the case-study students were given the knowledge form in class. They were given a total of nine minutes in class to complete the knowledge measure, three minutes for each concept. Students were instructed to write down in the allotted time what came to mind when they thought about these particular terms.

In the ninth week, a few days before the assignment was given in class, case-study students were trained to read and think-aloud throughout the constructive processes of the task-- as they read and responded to the source article, and/or as they referred to the source article as they constructed their own text, and/or as they worked on their own written critique without reference to the source article. Students first listened to a recording of a student solving a math problem. Then, they practiced thinking aloud as they read-wrote, using an article from an environmental magazine. This brief text was selected because it required students to write a persuasive letter to legislators in response to an article they read on the

destruction of the rain forest in Malaysia. In other words, the article was designed so that readers were writers constructing their own text in response to another author's text.

At the end of the think-aloud training session, case-study students were given an envelope that described two tasks and the directions they were to follow in completing them. These tasks, described below, were to complete a reading-writing log and to provide a discourse-based evaluation of their finished critique. They were also given a tape recorder and cassette tapes to record their responses for the discourse-based evaluation.

The first task was to complete a Reading-Writing Log as they worked on the assignment. As the Directions for the Reading-Writing Log explained, students were to fill out the information that pertained to the amount of time they spent and the activities they had completed immediately after each time they worked on their critique.

For the second task students were told to open a set of Written Instructions for Discourse Evaluations immediately after finishing their written critique. Recall that these instructions had students back through their written texts and evaluate them, indicating the parts they felt contributed or took away from the quality of the critique.

Later that same week all students were given the critique assignment. Instructions for the critique assignment were given verbally in class by the instructor:

> For next Thursday you are to hand in a critique of the Greil article, "On the Margins of the Sacred." It is good we didn't discuss it because I want your fresh responses to it. So, in fact, we won't discuss it in class until you've written about it. I want two pages, typed (with margins), in which you respond to this paper and its ideas.

Students were given seven days in which to complete the task of reading the Greil and Rudy article and writing an essay evaluating it. The instructor specified that she wanted students to do their own thinking about the article and to use the critique as an exercise in preparing them for class discussion. The article was not discussed in class prior to their writing their critique. The critique accounted for ten percent of the course grade.

Case-study students were interviewed ten days after they completed their written critique. The tape recording of each case-study student's discourse-based evaluation was played back during the interview. After each comment on tape about a strength or weakness the student elaborated in the interview and explained the reasons for the strength (+) and weakness (-) markings in their texts. The students' critiques were also available for reference during the interview. During the interview, case study students also elaborated upon their responses on the

demographic questionnaires and responded to questions regarding the writing of critiques in sociology (see Appendix J). Interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. The time delay for interviews was a result of the scheduling of the due date for the assignment. It coincided with mid-semester break and students were not accessible.

During the last week of class the Educational Status Questionnaire was passed around to students having them provide information about their educational status.

Text Variables for All Students

Configuration score. The configuration of TOPICS and COMMENTS in each critique was measured using a breadth-depth ratio based on thematic chaining and chunking (Spivey, 1983, 1984). Content units on the composite template of the source text had been tagged for the following thematic TOPICS:

DEFINITION

QR	QUASI-RELIGION
O-QR	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS
QR-D	QUASI-RELIGION-DEFINITION
R-D	RELIGION-DEFINITION
R-D-f	RELIGION-DEFINITION-FUNCTIONAL
R-D-s	RELIGION-DEFINITION-SUBSTANTIVE
R-D-f-v	RELIGION-DEFINITION-FUNCTIONAL-ADVANTAGE
R-D-f-g	RELIGION-DEFINITION-FUNCTIONAL-DISADVANTAGE
R-D-s-v	RELIGION-DEFINITION-SUBSTANTIVE-ADVANTAGE
QR-D-(1)	QUASI-RELIGION-DEFINITION (1)
R-D-s-g	RELIGION-DEFINITION-SUBSTANTIVE-DISADVANTAGE
R-D-am	RELIGION-DEFINITION-AMERICAN FOLK
K-D-am	RELIGIOUS-DEFINITION-AMERICAN FOLK
KO-D-am	NONRELIGIOUS-DEFINITION-AMERICAN FOLK
R-D-s-f-E	RELIGION-DEFINITION-SUBSTANTIVE-FUNCTIONAL-ERROR
R-D-t	RELIGION-DEFINITION-SUBJECTIVIST
R-D-b	RELIGION-DEFINITION-OBJECTIVIST
QR-D- (2)	QUASI-RELIGION-DEFINITION (2)

ILLUSTRATIONS

O-QR-sh-AA	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-SELF-HELP-ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
O-QR-sh-CP	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-SELF-HELP-COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
O-QR-p-est	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-HUMAN POTENTIAL MOVEMENT-est
O-QR-c-SSF	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-OCCULT TRADITION-SPIRITUAL FRONTIERS FELLOWSHIP
O-QR-na-X	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-NEW AGE-DIANETICS
O-QR-na-L	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-NEW AGE-SCIENTOLOGY
O-QR-na-TM	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-NEW AGE-TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS

O-QR-F	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-FEATURES
O-QR-G	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-GOALS
O-QR-ITO'S	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-IDENTITY TRANSFORMATION ORGANIZATIONS

RELIGIOUS/NONRELIGIOUS LABEL

O-QR-IA	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-IDEOLOGICAL AMBIGUITY
O-QR-RL-v-N	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-RELIGIOUS LABEL-ADVANTAGE-FINANCIAL
O-QR-RL-v-CL	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-RELIGIOUS LABEL-ADVANTAGE-CIVIL AND LABOR
O-QR-RL-v-NN	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-RELIGIOUS LABEL-ADVANTAGE-NONFINANCIAL
O-QR-RL-v-M	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-RELIGIOUS LABEL-ADVANTAGE-LEGITIMACY
O-QR-RL-v-J	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-RELIGIOUS LABEL-ADVANTAGE-EXISTENTIAL
O-QR-NRL-g-P	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-NONRELIGIOUS LABEL-DISADVANTAGE-PRACTICAL
O-QR-NRL-v-M	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-NONRELIGIOUS LABEL-ADVANTAGE-LEGITIMACY
O-QR-NRL-v-NN	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-NONRELIGIOUS LABEL-ADVANTAGE-NONFINANCIAL
O-QR-NRL-v-B	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-NONRELIGIOUS LABEL-ADVANTAGE-BUSINESS
O-QR-NRL-v-J	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-NONRELIGIOUS LABEL-ADVANTAGE-EXISTENTIAL

SIGNIFICANCE

O-QR-S	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-SIGNIFICANCE

IMPLICATIONS

O-QR-I	ORGANIZATION-QUASI-RELIGIOUS-IMPLICATIONS

Along with the content units in the source text, two additional TOPICS were included in the template to represent students' COMMENTS about information that was not explicitly stated or found in the text. First, the TOPIC "SOURCE ARTICLE" was included for occasions when students focused on the source text as the TOPIC and made COMMENTS concerning some aspect of it. In such instances, students might evaluate the clarity of the prose, or perhaps the authors' treatment of the issue, as in the following case: "Overall, On the Margins of the Sacred presents very interesting ideas, but does not back them up with facts or evidence."

A second TOPIC was included to represent TOPICS that students might introduce from outside the text into their critiques. For example, one student wrote in her essay: "The chaos in today's society (so-called modern problems such as drugs, child abuse, etc.) threaten people's sense of order and sense of a just world." Because this TOPIC is not discussed in the source text, it would be coded as IMPORT.

In such cases, however, raters wrote in what they believed the focus was, so that in this case, the TOPIC would be Import-Chaos. These two topics were tagged:

EXTERNAL TO THE TEXT

SA	SOURCE ARTICLE
PT	IMPORT

Combined with the 216 from the source text these two additional tags made for a total of 218 content units from which students could construct their written critiques. At times, the content units in students' written critiques signaled more than one of these themes. More often, a theme or a subset of themes from one content unit was found embedded within other content units to construct unique thematic configurations.

To determine the **CONFIGURATION SCORE** for each student critique, the thematic tags for all content units were listed in vertical chains in the order in which the writer had presented them in the critique. Figure 1 shows a chain for a sample critique (see Appendix K for the corresponding text). Once chains in a critique were listed the researcher looked for boundaries between thematic chunks. A boundary was identified when there was no overlapping thematic content for more than two content units.

Boundaries were examined case by case as the researcher read each critique to see if a student had constructed a link that was not from the source text. The following list of links, based on Spivey's (1983, 1984) method (cf. Anderson & Armbruster, 1985; D'Angelo, 1975; Grimes, 1975; Meyer, 1975; Schallert, Ulerick, & Tierney, 1985), seemed to cover the types of links used by the students in their critiques. An example from a student's critique is given for each link type.

1. Causal--Two chains are linked by supplying a cause-effect relationship between the content of the two.

> By doing this [categorizing], they are doing essentially the same thing they are being critical of other sociologists for doing.

2. Conditional--Two chains are linked because the elements of one are contingent upon elements in the other.

> Taking this line, I guess I'm questioning the whole idea of "quasi-religion" as being valid. . . . Maybe if Greil and Rudy write that longer paper someday, I could be persuaded to believe in their "quasi-religion" idea a little more.

3. Contrastive--Two chains are linked by pointing out some kind of contrast between the content of the two.

Figure 1
Sample Chain and Chunk for Student Critique

O-QR
O-QR
O-QR-D

O-QR-I

O-QR-S

O-QR-IA

O-QR-ITO

PT

R-D-s-f
R-D-s-f

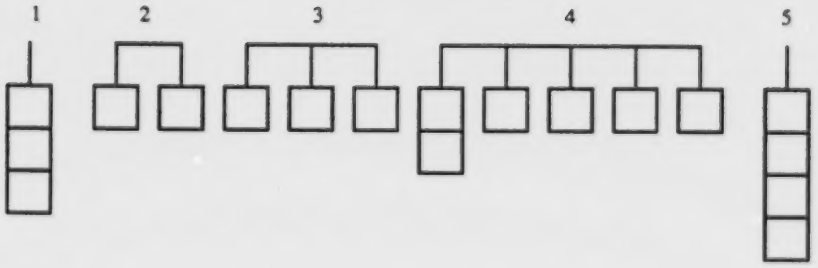
R-D-t

R

PT

R-D-t

O-QR-I
O-QR-I
O-QR-I
O-QR-I



> Greil and Rudy, however, define quasi-religions as "entities whose status is anomalous given contemporary folk definitions of religion."

4. Evaluation--Two chains are linked because the elements of one are used to evaluate elements in the other.

> After critical examination of this article, I have found that the authors made some broad assumptions and did not back them up a lot of their statements with facts.

5. Exemplification--Two chains are linked because the elements in one are used to illustrate elements in the other.

> Some of the quasi-religions mentioned by the authors do not want to be typed as religious since some people might be scared off by the idea of a different religion. . . . Alcoholics Anonymous is one example cited.

6. Explanation--Two chains are linked because elements of one are used to explain elements of another, in either a more abstract or concrete fashion

> [A discussion of different quasi-religious organizations and their treatment of a supreme being precedes this statement.]
> These superempirical concepts are deliberately vague and allow the follower to add their own interpretation, yet, still fit into the mold of Durkheim.

7. Similarity--Two chains are linked by pointing out some kind of similarity between the content of the two.

> On the one hand, some people are becoming more religious in the traditional sense, while on the other hand, others are finding religion within themselves. . . . I feel that this goes along with what the authors are saying because of how they spoke about these groups.

This type of scoring provided a count of the thematic chunks within a text (the breadth), which was divided by the total number of content units (the depth) to yield an organization score. The lower the score, the more unified and interwoven the content.

Commentary. After students' critiques were analyzed for their organization, that is, parsed into their thematic chaining and chunking, each content unit was coded for the type of evaluative COMMENT a student made about a TOPIC. Each COMMENT was coded as either Positive Commentary, Negative Commentary, or Suspended Commentary. An example from a student's essay is given for each type.

1. Positive commentary-- A COMMENT was considered positive (+) if it demonstrated agreement, like, or support of a TOPIC. A COMMENT that did not

explicitly state agreement, like, or support of a TOPIC but was embedded within a chain that did demonstrate positive judgment was also coded as a positive judgment if it contributed to the overall critical dimension.

> First of all, the authors make a very good critical statement about the substantives and functionalists in sociology.

2. Negative commentary-- A COMMENT was considered negative (-) if it demonstrated disagreement, dislike, or lack of support of a TOPIC. A COMMENT that did not explicitly state disagreement, dislike, or lack of support of a TOPIC but was embedded within a chain that did demonstrate negative judgment, was also coded as a negative judgment, if it contributed to the overall critical dimension.

> If the authors would have taken more time with clearer definitions, more in-depth study with statements that could have been considered fact, this article would have been much stronger and more credible.

3. Suspended commentary-- A COMMENT was considered suspended judgment (0) if it did not demonstrate any evaluative function of a TOPIC. A suspended COMMENT was generally a reporting of information.

> "Quasi-religions are organizations which either see themselves or are seen by others as 'sort-of' religious" (p. 221).

To obtain the score for commentary the total count for the three types of evaluative COMMENT was calculated. Then, the researcher divided the total number of Negative Commentary by the total number of TOPICS to obtain the proportion of Negative Commentary, the **NEGATIVE COMMENTARY SCORE**, for each critique. The higher the proportion, the higher the score, and thus the more negative the critique.

Source of support. The degree to which students' evaluations of the source article were Personal Commentary to the material or Disciplinary-based Commentary was calculated by looking at how they supported their COMMENTS on TOPICS. This measure examined the source of students' support for their comments by coding each COMMENT as either Disciplinary-based or Personal SOURCE OF SUPPORT. An example from a student's essay is given for each type.

1. Disciplinary-based--A COMMENT was coded as Disciplinary (D) in nature if it made use of material from the source text, class discussions, related readings, other related courses, or background knowledge in sociology.

> Most likely [the American Folk definition of religion is losing its hold], because while people still have the same needs that caused them to turn to religion in the first place--need to have answers to the unanswerable, sense of order in the world,

sense of community, help in dealing with human dilemmas--
many of these needs have grown due to changes in society.

2. Personal-- A COMMENT was coded as Personal (P) if it made use of material related to a student's personal experience, background, or opinion. In this case, COMMENTS included references to a student's life or beliefs.

A very close friend of my father's is an alcoholic.

Each of the two types of source of support was totaled. Then, the number of Disciplinary-based COMMENTS was divided by the total number of COMMENTS. This measured the proportion of Disciplinary-based COMMENTS to the total number of COMMENTS to provide a score for **SOURCE OF SUPPORT**. The higher the proportion, the more students were using disciplinary knowledge to convince their readers.

Textual transformations. Another measure that was used to examine the students' critiques was a score for textual transformations. This measure looked at the degree to which students relied on the source text for their COMMENTS. Each COMMENT was coded as either relying on the source text very closely (Correspondent) and making use of the authors' words and organization or transforming the source text information (Transformed), paraphrasing the text and importing information from outside the text. An example from a student's essay is given for each type.

1. Correspondent-- A COMMENT unit was coded as Correspondent (C), if it was readily identifiable as a content unit in the source text. Generally, these segments consisted of entire passages or discrete pieces of information taken directly from passages in the source text. These content units directly corresponded to the authors' words when including source text information.

The authors show that they feel that the "proper focus of the study of religion is what people do when they think of themselves as doing religion'" (p. 221).

2. Transformed--A COMMENT was coded as Transformed (T), if it evaluated information in the source text in a more abstract fashion. Generally, these COMMENTS were identified as representing a particular idea in the text, but could not be tied to any specific passage or part, thereof. Content units that were coded as Transformed could also be imported from outside the source text. Imported COMMENTS represented ideas related to issues in the text, but did not directly include source text information.

Identifying these organizations as quasi-religions, the authors clearly defined how they have become increasingly acceptable within the spectrum of how Americans "do religion."

The total number of Correspondent and Transformed COMMENTS was calculated. Next, the total number of Transformed COMMENTS was divided by the total number of COMMENTS. The proportion of Transformed COMMENTS to the total number of COMMENTS students made was calculated to provide a score for **TEXTUAL TRANSFORMATION**, the degree to which students' critiques included COMMENTS that were imported from outside the text or that were not taken word-for-word from the source text. The higher the proportion, the less students relied on the source text when constructing their critiques.

Holistic quality. After students completed the assignment, their texts were typed with spelling and punctuation errors removed. The critiques were then given to four sociology professors who rated the texts individually and on their own time. Criteria for what constitutes a quality critique were not discussed prior to the ratings. Rather, professors were instructed to apply the criteria they believed appropriate for a critique task in sociology. Each critique was given an impressionistic score by each of the four professors and the sum of the four ratings was used for a **HOLISTIC QUALITY SCORE** (see Appendix L for rating directions). The scores potentially ranged from 4 (for a critique that received a rating of 1 from each professor) to 20 (for a critique that received a rating of 5 from each professor).

In addition to the measure of the summed rating for each critique, another measure included the ratings of each individual professor (**INDIVIDUAL HOLISTIC QUALITY SCORE**). These were used to examine individual differences among professors' evaluations of the students' texts.

Other Variables for All Students

Status as major or non-major. All students provided information on the Educational Status Questionnaire concerning their status as a major or non-major in sociology. If students responded that they were majors they were given a status score of 1. If they responded that they were non-majors their status score was 0.

Educational level. Students also provided information on the Educational Status Questionnaire concerning their current educational level in the university. Students that were seniors received an educational level score of 4. Juniors received a score of 3. Sophomores received a score of 2. And first-year students received a score of 1.

Additional Variables for Case-Study Students

Comments from think aloud protocols. To measure what COMMENTS students included in their think-aloud protocols, the total number of NEGATIVE COMMENTARY they verbalized throughout the constructive process was totaled. This was done by transcribing and parsing each of the case-study student's think-aloud protocols into content units using a TOPIC-COMMENT pattern similar to that used in the analysis of texts. The units of the think-aloud protocols that were NEGATIVE COMMENTARY were then coded using the thematic tags of the source text template (refer to Appendix B). The thematic tags for all units were listed in

vertical chains according to the order in which the reader/writer had presented them in the think-aloud protocol.

Knowledge level. Case-study students' prior knowledge measures were read and scored using three categories of knowledge organization (Newell & MacAdam, 1987). The first category, Highly Organized Knowledge, consisted of superordinate concepts, definitions, and analogies. The second category, Partially Organized Knowledge, consisted of examples, attributes, and defining characteristics of a concept. The third category, Diffusely Organized Knowledge, consisted of associations and personal experience. A highly organized response received a score of 3, a partially organized response received a score of 2, and a diffusely organized response received a score of 1. A score for each student was calculated adding the ratings from each concept. If a student received a rating of 3 on all three concepts then that student would receive a score of 9, which was the highest score a student could receive. The lowest score a student could receive was a 3, if the student received a 1 on all three concepts.

The following guidelines adapted by Greene (1990) from Newell and MacAdam (1987) were used in rating each of the case study student's knowledge measure:

1. Each association is rated separately and independently at only one level of knowledge organization.

2. Incomplete definitions and imprecise word use may be defining characteristics (partially organized) rather than definitions (well-organized).

3. Attention to specificity is important in rating a response.

4. When the prompt or its root is used as part of the response with little or no elaboration, such a response is rated as diffusely organized unless there is further elaboration in the response indicating a higher level of organization.

5. If a response is inaccurate, even if it is well-structured, rate such a response as diffusely organized.

Following are examples illustrating the three categories of knowledge:

1. Diffusely Organized Knowledge. One of the 5 case-study students listed information that was inaccurate and thus, was awarded a score of 1 for her response to the Substantive Definition of Religion. She wrote:

"what it means"
belief in supernatural being
sort of legitimization

2. Partially Organized Knowledge. Another student responding to the same prompt wrote defining characteristics of the Substantive Definition of Religion and received a score of 2 for this information:

- what religion "is"
- a set of beliefs which are culturally patterned and centered around a culturally postulated super-human being
- culturally and historically bound
- useful for empirical studies
- not useful for observing non-western religions

3. Highly Organized Knowledge. And one student responded this way, receiving a score of 3 for including more superordinate concepts, definitions, and analogies:

> definition of religion which focuses on the sacred, describes some sort of religion-including rituals and practices.
> This is a more limited definition type and does not include ways of life such as Marxism. This clear-cut type definition is more easily researched and collecting data within this def. type of religion is much easier.

Time spent on task. The total number of hours and minutes students recorded was used for analyzing possible relationships between time devoted to the task and quality ratings of the case-study students' text.

Results

This study was designed to answer four questions: 1) How do students perform the writing of a critique?; 2) What features of written critiques are valued most by professors in their discipline?; 3) How well do students' educational level and status as a major or non-major predict the quality of their critique ratings?; and 4) Are there commonalties across students in the kinds of COMMENTS made when reading that do not appear in their critiques?

How do students perform the writing of a critique?

In order to answer this question, several other questions were posed that provided some detail about the task of critique. These questions were specifically related to how the students went about constructing their texts.

a) What types of organizational patterns do their written critiques reflect?

b) What types of evaluative COMMENTS do they make about the TOPICS on which they focus their critiques?

c) What type of SUPPORT do they use to substantiate their judgments?

d) What types of TEXTUAL TRANSFORMATIONS do they include in their texts?

This question was answered descriptively by analyzing the ways in which students developed their critiques: through the ways in which students configured their critiques (their CONFIGURATION SCORES); through the COMMENTARY they provided on TOPICS; through the SOURCE OF SUPPORT they used to substantiate their evaluative judgments and; through the TEXTUAL TRANSFORMATIONS they included in their texts.

Organization patterns. In writing their critiques, students averaged 28 TOPIC-COMMENT units (*SD*=11.08) and the range was 50. As indicated by this range, some of the critiques varied greatly in length. The fewest number of units a student included was 15. On the other end of the continuum was a student who included 65 TOPIC-COMMENT units. Students who had fewer TOPIC-COMMENT units wrote less elaborate texts with fewer thematic chains and in many cases did not provide as much development of the TOPIC that they had selected for commentary as did those students who had more units.

The writers had organized the content units in thematic chunks, which were consecutive content units with thematically related TOPICS. In other words, a thematic chain became part of a larger chunk when students signaled a relationship (e.g., causal or evaluative) between different, but consecutive TOPICS. In some cases these chunks were paragraphs and in many cases they were not. Sometimes the related chunks would continue beyond a paragraph boundary. And sometimes a new chunk would begin within a paragraph. Let's take for example, a paragraph in one student's critique, which signaled three different chunks of information. This student began her text describing competing definitions of quasi-religion, then she continued by bringing to bear subjectivist perspectives on them, and finally she positioned herself with the authors' view against substantive definitions of religion. She did all of this in one paragraph, combining various TOPICS that were thematically related.

Other students wrote similarly. The students as a group averaged 7 chunks in their critiques (*SD*= 2.33). The range was 9; the minimum number of chunks a student used to organize a critique was 3 and the maximum number was 12.

The chunk measure reflected the breadth of a students selection of TOPICS. And the total number of content units a student included in the critique reflected the depth of the discussion of the TOPICS. The ratio of breadth to depth was the CONFIGURATION SCORE. A more narrowly focused (and more tightly organized) critique would have a lower score. More broadly written critiques (and more loosely organized) would have higher scores. In other words, students whose critiques had a lot of content in fewer chunks wrote papers in which they had selected more TOPICS about which to comment, linking TOPICS to develop critical

lines of reasoning. The average ratio of amount of content to the number of chunks was .26 and the standard deviation was .08. The range was .075 to .429. As Figure 2 shows, these two critiques reflect different organizing principles.

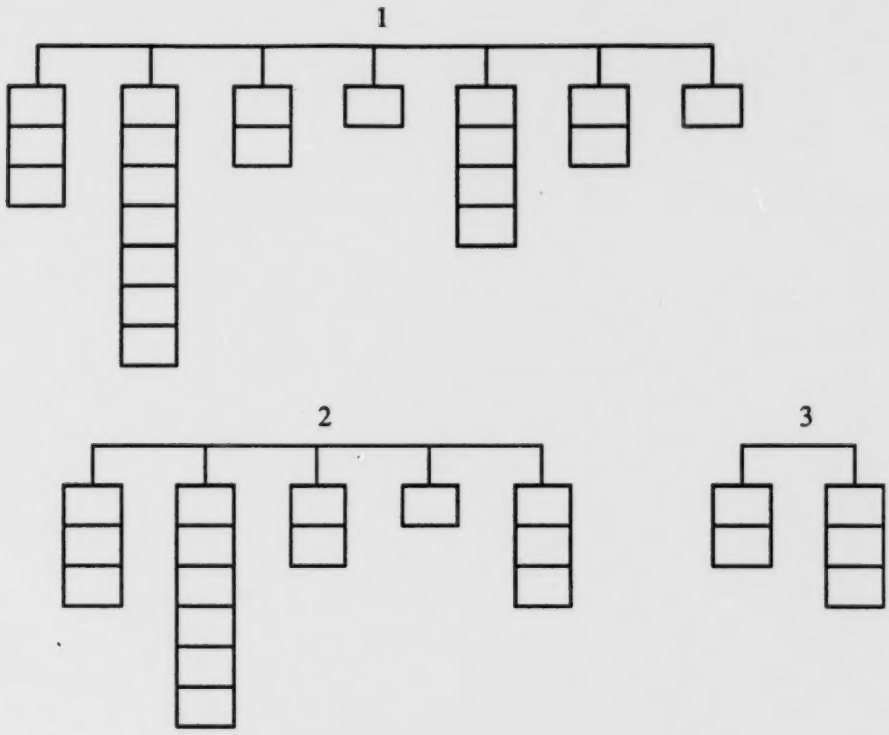
The first structure in Figure 2 is for a critique of a student whom we will call Kathryn. If we look at Kathryn's critique, we see that her structure is tight, with 14 thematic chains that are subsumed under three chunks by the links and connections she makes among the various chains. Her first chunk consists of 7 different thematic chains that work in concert to construct an overview of the source article, as well as provide evaluative COMMENTARY on particular points that she believes warrant consideration. She does this by first establishing the major points of the source text, which she takes to be the authors' explanation about why quasi-religious organizations have come about. She then goes on to challenge that view by bringing up two alternative hypotheses about the way the authors have organized the groups. In particular, she critiques the authors for putting diverse groups into the same category without differentiating among. These groups tend to work on discrete problems related to adult experiences or to a loss of meaning in adults' lives. She goes on to contrast the different types of groups the authors have lumped together using the same terminology, quasi-religion, and to demonstrate how they differ in their goals and their approach in helping provide meaning in adults' lives or alleviating problems their problems. Finally, she explicitly states that "it is necessary to make clear these two types of quasi-religious groups, which, in mind, are distinct and serve separate purposes.

In the next chunk of text, which is subsumed under the number 2, she explains her reasoning concerning the effectiveness of these groups for children, whose life experience has been limited and may not have the same types of needs with which quasi-religions deal. She develops this line of reasoning as she discusses the role of religion in the socialization of children, a TOPIC she imports from outside the source article. Specifically, she thinks that children would not benefit from the quasi-religion of their parents because "they are chosen by an individual to meet his or her own needs, and thus, a child would not benefit by being forced to adopt a parent's quasi-religious meaning system."

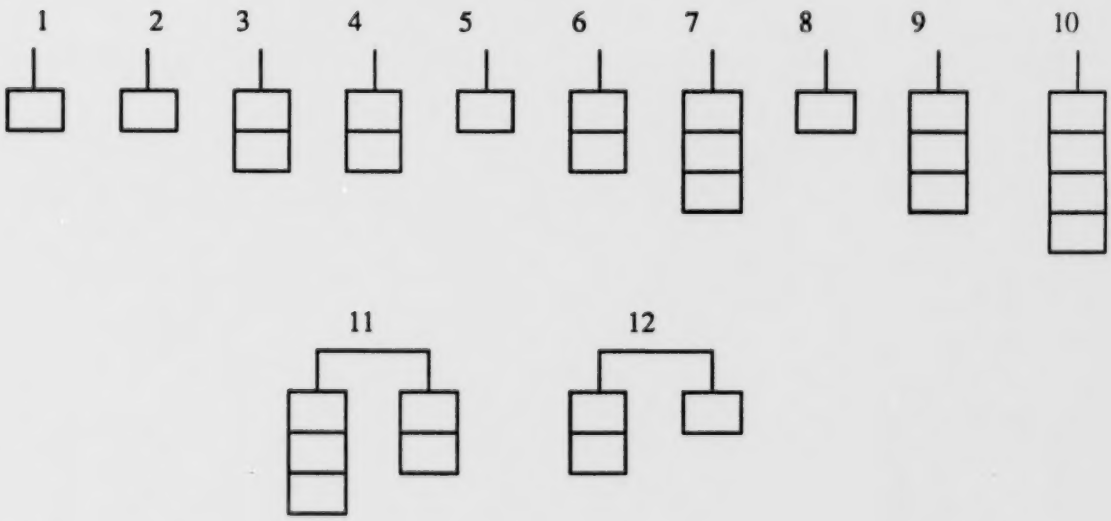
Finally, Kathryn summarizes her position in the third chunk (which consists of two chunks) by explaining that quasi-religious groups have become prominent because of the individual nature of problems people face in a contemporary society. She connects this line of thought with a causal link: these problems are responsible for the appeal of these groups, which serve purposes different to those of "traditional Western religions." Thus, she sees their value at the individual level, where "old systems no longer hold meaning for them [individuals]." And so, while Kathryn thinks the concept is valuable, she qualifies and thus, constrains some of the authors' claims.

Figure 2

Kathryn's Critique



Natalie's Critique



The second structure in Figure 2 is for a student whom we will call Natalie. Natalie's critique, on the other hand, is an example of a loose structure, the loosest of all the critiques. Like Kathryn, Natalie has 14 thematic chains in her critique. Unlike Kathryn, though, Natalie does not make many connections or links between the chains and all of her TOPICS are subsumed under 12 chunks that are not developed in much depth .

Natalie devotes most of her text to summarizing the article. She does not provide an overview of the main points or claims, but instead recounts how the authors set up the article. Typical of her discourse is suspended COMMENTARY such as "The authors discuss both functional and substantive views of religion and each of their advantages and disadvantages." Natalie continues in this mode of summarizing through the first 9 chains. It is not until chain 10 that she begins to provide COMMENTARY, all of which is positive. In chain 10 she focuses on the Source Article, aligning herself with it. "I found this essay to be very interesting and enlightening, " she writes.

In the next chain she does construct a link, which explains why she finds this article so enlightening. She imports a TOPIC of that demonstrates her view of the world: "I feel the world is, in fact, moving in two very different directions." She links this type of reasoning with why she supports the source text--her thinking and that of the authors are similar: I feel that this [her view] goes along with what the authors are saying because of how they spoke about these groups." Finally, in the last chain she moves back to the Source Article and continues with positive COMMENTARY, connecting her own beliefs with those in the source text. "I was very impressed because I could follow along," she end. "Their essay went along with most of my feelings about religion, and I could identify with what these groups stood for through my own individual experiences."

Types of comments. The critiques were composed of COMMENTS about the TOPICS students selected as the basis of their texts. Thus, a COMMENT was a part of each TOPIC-COMMENT unit. The total number of COMMENTS was equivalent to the number of content units. If, for example, a critique had 28 content units, it also had 28 COMMENTS. The COMMENTS that students made about the TOPICS were of three different kinds: Positive, Negative, and Suspended. Table 2 shows how the group as a whole commented on the TOPICS. Although the table indicates that students were more apt to comment either favorably (M=.39, SD=.25) or negatively (M=.38, SD=.29) about the TOPICS they selected rather than to suspend judgment (M=.23, SD=.22), the standard deviations for the types of commentary show that it would be misleading to think that this consistency is seen throughout all texts; the standard deviations for the three types of COMMENTS are all large when examined relative to the means.

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for Types of Critical Comments

	Mean	Standard deviation
Critical Comments		
Positive	.39	.25
Negative	.38	.29
Suspended	.23	.22

Students generally did not include a variety of the three types of commentary, but tended to have a critique that was heavy in one or the other of the three categories. In other words, students usually did not say something positive about one TOPIC and then move on to another TOPIC and provide negative commentary. Some students chose not to say anything against the source text. Others chose to include only commentary that was not in support of it. The range for the types of commentary provide insight into this.

The range for Negative Commentary was 36, with the minimum number of this type of COMMENT being 0 and the maximum 36. For Positive Commentary the range was 19, with the minimum number of this type of COMMENT being 0 and the maximum 19. And, for Suspended Commentary, the range was 37, with a minimum of 1 and the maximum of 38. Thus, some students' critiques were overwhelmingly positive, some were overwhelmingly negative, and some were overwhelmingly a reporting of information, suspending judgment. However, a small number of students wrote critiques that were more balanced, including COMMENTS of all three types.

Students commented on the TOPICS in a number of ways. Some used them to demonstrate the merit or value of the concept quasi-religion or to show their agreement with the authors' interpretation of the link between modernity and spirituality. Others provided negative commentary to demonstrate concern, hesitation or dislike of the article or some of its premises. And still, there were a few students who reported on information without strongly aligning themselves with the authors. If we go back to the two critiques discussed earlier, those of Kathryn and Natalie, we can get a sense of their use of COMMENTS as they are used in the context of the discourse.

Kathryn began her critique by providing the reader with a brief overview of the article. This can be seen in the first two content units, which are suspending judgment. Rather, they are a reporting of information, specifically, what the authors of the article discuss and why these organizations have become prominent:

1. Organizations-quasi-religious-implications
   1. The article by Greil and Rudy titled "On the Margins of the Sacred" describes quasi-religions and how their presence signifies a change in the way that American Judeo-Christian religions are perceived in the U.S.

2. Organizations-quasi-religious-implications
   2. The authors believe that individuals in the U.S. are choosing quasi-religions over their traditional transcendent worldviews because of increased globalization, privatization, and the practical orientation of the quasi-religions.

After providing an overview of what Kathryn says is the gist of the article, she favorably aligns herself with the authors saying that she agrees with their assertion concerning the implications of quasi-religious organizations. At this point she also let's the reader know that she will discuss two points in particular:

3. Organizations-quasi-religious-implications
   3. I agree with the authors' assertion and would like to discuss two points which were raised in my mind while reading the article.

Finally, Kathryn tells the reader what specific weaknesses she finds in the source article. The following two content units demonstrate negative commentary about quasi-religious organizations:

4. Organizations-quasi-religious
   4. First, I see a need to differentiate between quasi-religions which are organized around a specific problem and those which are not.

5. Organizations-quasi-religious
   5. And secondly, I question if quasi-religions, which tend to be therapeutic-oriented, are useful for adults only, or can they be functional for children and their socialization needs as well.

As we saw earlier in our description of Kathryn' s critique, she ends on a more positive comment. After demonstrating how Greil and Rudy's discussion of quasi-religious organizations does not consider the implications for children (religion plays a strong role in their socialization), she states that:

40. Organization-quasi-religious
   40. Quasi-religions act as important alternatives for those whose lives have changed to the point that the old systems no longer hold meaning for them.

Unlike Kathryn, whose critique develops her two reservations about quasi-religions and thus, has predominantly negative commentary, Natalie's critique is more balanced in that she tends to describe the article in the first half of her critique (which would be considered Suspended Commentary) and then in the second half

provide more evaluative commentary, most of which is positive. In the first content unit Natalie provides an overall positive commentary on the article, explaining that she thinks it is interesting. In the next content unit we see her giving an overview of the article, suspending judgment. She continues suspending judgment for most of her critique as she explains what she thinks the authors are saying.

1. Quasi-religions
   1. The essay, "On the Margins of the Sacred," by Arthur L. Greil and David R. Rudy is a very interesting idea based on the concept of quasi-religions.

2. Source article-organization
   2. This essay is split into basically two halves: the definition and the authors interpretation of the proper use of this term, and examples of what they believe to be "appropriately classified" as quasi-religions.

3. Quasi-religion-definition (2)
   3. This essay explains that quasi-religions are somewhat religious.

4. Quasi-religion-definition (2)
   4. They move somewhere between the secular and the sacred.

Not until the end of her critique does she begin to provide evaluative commentary again. It is overwhelmingly positive, primarily because the article reinforces what she currently holds to be true:

21. Import
    21. I feel that I learned a great deal about what these organizations stood for, believed in, and why they would choose to be the way that they were.

22. Import
    22. I feel that the world is, in fact, moving in two very different directions.

23. Import
    23. On the one hand, some people are becoming more religious in the traditional sense, while on the other hand, others are finding religion within themselves.

24. Organizations-quasi-religious
    24. I feel that this goes along with what the authors are saying because of how they spoke about these groups.

25. Organizations-quasi-religious-goals
    25. Each one had its own goals, worldviews, and philosophies, but they all showed an importance in helping others to find their way.

Of particular interest in this study was the amount of NEGATIVE COMMENTARY in a critique, the proportion of negative COMMENTS to the total number of COMMENTS.

Types of support for comments. Another way in which the texts varied was in the types of support students used to back up their comments. There were two types, disciplinary and personal. Students tended to use disciplinary support rather than personal support. They averaged about .64 disciplinary and .36 personal COMMENTS that served as the basis for their COMMENTARY support. The mean number of disciplinary SOURCE OF SUPPORT was about 18, with a standard deviation of 9. The range was wide, with 4 being the lowest number of disciplinary SOURCE OF SUPPORT and 37 the maximum to provide a range of 33. For personal, the mean was 10, with a standard deviation of about 9. The range for personal SOURCE OF SUPPORT was 34, with 0 being the minimum number of personal commentaries and 34 the maximum. Similar to students' use of the three types of evaluative COMMENTARY, their use of SOURCE OF SUPPORT varied, with some students constructing critiques that were heavy with personal commentary and others that were heavy with disciplinary commentary.

Students also interspersed disciplinary with personal commentary for a more mixed text. For example, Kathryn tends to provide disciplinary commentary to map out her critique, but then provides her own personal commentary to summarize her argument, saying things like, "In fact, I question whether quasi-religions such as Scientology, TM, or est are beneficial for children at all." About .78 of Kathryn's critique is disciplinary and .22 is personal commentary. Natalie, on the other hand, also writes a mixed critique (.61 disciplinary and .39 personal commentary). But the use of her commentary is different than that of Kathryn's. For example, Natalie tends to report broadly on TOPICS from the text, explaining what the authors wrote. Kathryn selected fewer TOPICS on which to focus. Kathryn's use of personal commentary as seen above is to summarize a position, whereas for Natalie it is to generally comment on how she liked the text: "I was very impressed because I could follow along so easily and because I got a lot out of having read this essay."

Of particular interest in this study was the amount of Disciplinary-based SOURCE OF SUPPORT in a critique, the proportion of disciplinary COMMENTS to the total number of COMMENTS.

Types of textual transformations. This measure looked at how students used the source text to construct their COMMENTS. Students stayed very close to the original text, using the authors' words and presenting information in the same order as the source text (Correspondent). Or, they paraphrased information putting it into their own words, own order, and imported information from outside the text (Transformed). Overall, students tended not to use the source text verbatim, but chose instead to paraphrase and import information from outside the source text. Thus, the COMMENTS students provided were overwhelmingly Transformed. For

example, .90 (*SD*=.10) of the COMMENTS students used were of this type, compared to .10 (*SD*=.10) of the Correspondent type. The mean number of Transformed COMMENTS was 26 and the range was 51, with a minimum number of 11 and a maximum of 62 such COMMENTS. The mean number for Correspondent COMMENTS was 3 and the range was 10, with a minimum number of 0 and a maximum of 10 Correspondent COMMENTS.

Again, if we look at Kathryn and Natalie, we see some of the variability described above. Kathryn's critique consists entirely of Transformed text. She paraphrases the TOPICS she selects from the source article and puts them in a unique order. She imports TOPICS from outside the source article, bringing in novel perspectives from which to construct her own text. Natalie, who wrote a different type of critique than Kathryn has more Correspondent text than Kathryn. Eleven percent of her critique is based upon information that she has taken directly from the source article: "The authors show that they feel that "the proper focus of the study of religion is what people do when they think of themselves as 'doing religion'" (p.221). Overall, though students tended to use more Transformed text when constructing their own text.

Of particular interest in this study was the amount of TRANSFORMED TEXT students wrote in a critique, the proportion of Transformed COMMENTS to the total number of COMMENTS.

The major variables of interest and their means and standard deviations can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3

Performance on Measures

	Means	Standard deviation
Measures		
Configuration of content	.26	.08
Negative commentary	.38	.29
Disciplinary source of support	.64	.23
Transformed text	.90	.09

What features of written critiques are valued most by professors in their discipline?

The sum of the instructors' ratings were used as the criterion in a regression analysis to reveal what they consider to be features of a good critique. Predictors included the CONFIGURATION SCORE, NEGATIVE COMMENTARY SCORE, DISCIPLINARY SOURCE OF SUPPORT SCORE and the TRANSFORMED TEXT SCORE. In

In addition, analysis was conducted with each individual instructor's ratings to study variability within the group.

Before conducting the regression analysis, intercorrelations were examined among the predictors and between the predictors and the holistic ratings (summed and for each rater). Table 4 shows these correlations. As one would expect, the correlations between the summed holistic score and COMMENTARY and SOURCE OF SUPPORT are high. Worth noting is the lack of significant correlations among the various predictors.

Table 4

Intercorrelations Among the Critique Variables

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Commentary	1.00	.09	.08	-.29	.52**
2. Source of support		1.00	.04	13	.47*
3. Transformed text			1.00	-.07	.15
4. Configuration				1.00	-.20
5. Holistic summed					1.00

* $p < .01$ ** $p < .005$

A multiple regression was conducted to see how well the four predictors in concert predicted the scores and to see which variables served as the best predictors for a quality critique. The dependent measure was the summed holistic score of the four raters. The summed ratings averaged 11 (SD=3.61) and ranged from 4 to 18. The four predictors in the regression included the CONFIGURATION SCORE, the NEGATIVE COMMENTARY SCORE, the DISCIPLINARY SOURCE OF SUPPORT SCORE, the TRANSFORMED TEXT SCORE. The regression was conducted in a series of three steps. The first step involved entering all of the predictors. As shown in Table 5, this equation was significant, F (DF)=6.07, p <.001. Combined, the predictors accounted for .47 of the variance in the summed ratings. An examination of the beta weights (standardized regression coefficients) showed that the NEGATIVE COMMENTARY SCORE and DISCIPLINARY SOURCE OF SUPPORT SCORE made the strongest contributions to the equation.

The second and third steps entailed removing two predictors, the TRANSFORMED TEXT SCORE and the CONFIGURATION SCORE to see if the F of the equation would change significantly. As Table 5 shows, removal of these two predictors did not alter the significance of the model. The second step was removal of the TRANSFORMED TEXT SCORE. This did little to change the equation, which now accounted for 46 percent of the variance. The F change for the R^2 was not statistically significant. R was now .68 $F(3, 28) = 8.14$, $p < .0001$. The final step was the removal of the CONFIGURATION SCORE. This third step did little to alter the equation as well. R was .67, $F(2, 29) = 11.95$, $p < .0001$. Removing this predictor changed the variance by only .02, which was not statistically significant. The model, with the remaining two variables, the NEGATIVE COMMENTARY SCORE and DISCIPLINARY SOURCE OF SUPPORT SCORE accounted for 45 percent of the overall variance in the equation. Thus, those critiques which tended to have more negative commentary and disciplinary support of that commentary tended to receive higher quality ratings from the raters.

Table 5

Results of Multiple Regression on Summed Ratings

Step	R	R^2	R^2Change	F for change	F for equation	Predictors in equation	Beta weight	t for Beta weight
1. Entry of all. predictors	.69	.47			6.07***	Configuration	-.12	-.81
						Commentary	.44	2.99*
						Source of support	.44	3.10**
						Transformed text	.09	.63
2. Removal of transformed text	.68	.46	-.01	2.07	8.14****	Configuration	-.12	- .86
						Commentary	.44	3.06**
						Source of support	.44	3.18**
3. Removal of configuration	.67	.45	-.02	3.81	11.95****	Commentary	.48	3.50**
						Source of support	.42	3.08**

*p<.05 ** p<.005 ***p<.001 ****p<.0001

To assess the variability among professors quality ratings, a series of regressions was conducted on individual rater's scores to see which variables were the best predictors for each. The beta weights were examined to see which seemed to be the strongest predictors for each professor. According to Table 6, professors did vary in their evaluations, applying different criteria to rate the quality of students' critiques. The beta weights show that two of the professors' ratings were related to the negative COMMENTARY students made about the article, and two of the professors' rating were related to the disciplinary SOURCE OF SUPPORT students provided for their COMMENTARY.

Table 6 shows that the regression equation for Rater 1 was significant, R = .56, F (4, 27) =3.07, $p < .05$. The beta weights show that only one predictor made a significant contribution to the equation, the negative COMMENTARY. The equation for Rater 2 was also significant, R =.55, F (4, 27), = 2.86, $p < .05$. In this case, though, the predictor that made a significant contribution to the equation was the disciplinary SOURCE OF SUPPORT.

For Rater 3 and Rater 4 the equation was not significant, accounting for only .22 and .23 of the variance, respectively. If we look at the beta weights for Rater 3, we see that like Rater 2, this Rater's holistic scores were related more to the disciplinary SOURCE OF SUPPORT students used for their evaluative COMMENTS. Though not significant, the beta weight for the SOURCE OF SUPPORT is approaching significance (p = .06). When we look at the beta weights for Rater 4, we see that this professor's holistic scores were similar to Rater 1's. Both of their ratings were related to the negative COMMENTARY in students' critiques. Though not significant, the beta weight for the negative COMMENTARY was approaching significance (p = .057).

Table 6

Results of Multiple Regressions for Four Raters

	R	R^2	F for equation	Predictors in equation	Beta weight	t for Beta weight
Rater 1	.56	.31	3.07*	Configuration	-.01	.05
				Commentary	.49	2.94**
				Source of support	. 17	1.04
				Transformed text	.11	.66
Rater 2	.55	.30	2.86*	Configuration	-.17	-1.00
				Commentary	.11	.67
				Source of support	.47	2.85**
				Transformed text	.15	.95
Rater 3	.47	.22	1.88	Configuration	-.10	-.54
				Commentary	.27	1.51
				Source of support	.34	1.94
				Transformed text	.02	-.15
Rater 4	.47	.23	1.97	Configuration	-.06	-.33
				Commentary	.35	1.99
				Source of support	.27	1.55
				Transformed text	-.00	-.02

*$p<.05$ **$p<.01$

How well do students' educational level and status as amajor or non-major predict the quality of their critique ratings?

The sum of the instructors' ratings was used as the criterion in a regression analysis to reveal possible associations with students' educational experience. Predictors included students' status of major or non-major and their educational level, both of which were categorical (dummy) variables.

Results of the regression show that the equation was not significant. *R* was .37, $F(2, 29) = 2.35$, accounting for only .14 of the total variance. As shown in Table 7, educational level was more strongly linked to quality rating than the status of sociology major. The beta weights were .304 and .177, respectively. When major status was not factored into the equation, however, educational level was approaching significance ($t = 1.914$, $p = .065$).

Table 7

Results of the Multiple Regression on Educational Status

R	R2	F for equation	Predictors in equation	Beta weight	t for Beta weight
.37	.14	2.35	Level	.304	1.74
			Major	.177	1.02

Are there commonalties across the kinds of COMMENTS students made when reading that do not appear in their critiques?

As seen in Table 8, all of the case-study students were females and were in the upper educational levels. They had written critiques that received summed quality ratings that ranged from 8 to 17. Their backgrounds were diverse, with students majoring in a variety of disciplines. Two students were majoring in sociology, 2 in political science (one of these students was double-majoring in philosophy), and 1 was majoring in liberal studies. Three of the students had about the same number of courses (6-7) in sociology prior to taking this course. One had 4 courses and 1 had no background in sociology before the course.

For the most part, these 5 students were above-average in their overall grade point average. One student, however, was about average, although her SAT verbal score was the second highest of the students for whom the scores were available. The students' knowledge scores were also similar, reflecting a fairly good sense of the major concepts that would be necessary to understand the article. Last, the students reports from their reading-writing log showed that some had invested more time on performing the task than others. The longest amount time a student spent on the task was 6:15 hours and the least amount of time was 3 hours.

During the time these students spent working on the task, they verbalized their thoughts aloud. The number and types of COMMENTARY from case-study students' think aloud protocols were compared with those in their written critiques

to determine which critical judgments made their way into the critique and which were edited out.

Table 8

Profile of Case-Study Students

Student	Level	Major	No. sociology courses	SAT verbal score	QPA	Time on task (hrs. & min.)	Knowledge score	Critique rating
Donna	Sr.	Liberal studies	6	450	3.03	3.34	2.0	12
Ellen	Sr.	Political Science	4	NA	3.81	3.00	2.0	14
Kathryn	Jr.	Sociology	7	550	3.76	4.45	2.0	17
Kelly	Jr.	Political Science/ Philosophy	0	440	3.28	6.15	1.6	12
Natalie	Jr.	Sociology	6	490	2.44	4.30	1.6	8

Of the 5 case-study students, 4 remarked negatively about the article as they worked to construct their critiques. One student, Natalie, who wrote an overwhelmingly positive critique of the source article, however, made no negative COMMENTARY whatsoever as she read-wrote. In fact, her think-aloud protocol indicated that she focused on understanding the text without challenging it and agreed with all of the authors' points that she verbalized aloud as she worked. For example:

> Ok, so I guess the error is that um...the phenomena of religion exists no matter what, that people's conceptions of what it is doesn't make it into what it is, though, um, this isn't really true. The book;s saying I have to agree with that, that what people define religion to be and how they act is really what, you know, they worship.

In the case of the other 4 students, there were some similarities in the negative COMMENTARY that 3 of them verbalized and the negative COMMENTARY in their final written critiques. Of these 3, though, 2 wrote predominantly negative critiques, and 1 wrote a fairly mixed critique. Another student, Donna, who had provided negative COMMENTARY as she worked to produce her own text, suspended judgment in her final written text, commenting instead on her own religious background. Thus, negative COMMENTARY varied for these students.

The 2 students that wrote more negative critiques followed similar patterns in that most of the negative COMMENTARY they verbalized as they worked became the basis of their evaluation of the source article. As they read, they made comments concerning their reservations about the concept or the manner in which the authors presented it. For one student, Kelly, the concept quasi-religion itself was a problem. As she worked to build a critical representation of the source text, she constantly came back to what she considered to be a conflation of two separate

concepts, the sacred and secular. This line of reasoning, so present in her verbalization, forms the basis of her written critique. For example, Kelly says :

> Maybe I'm just disagreeing with the name [quasi-religion]. It has religious qualities, but it has secular qualities, so why is it ... a religious phenomena. Why isn't is a secular .... phenomena that has religious characteristics? I mean, it is, but it's not. this article doesn't portray it like that ...

She continues this line of thought as she works:

> "I think that leads to a lot of misconceptions. I think it's the wrong label.

In her final text, Kelly focuses her critique on the problem of referring to these groups as quasi-relgious, when in fact, they are not:

> I disagree that the organizations used as examples in the article, except perhaps Transcendental Meditation, are "appropriately referred to as "quasi-religions," and that they are a religious phenomena.

Only one negative COMMENTARY did not make its way into her final text. The COMMENTARY was not directly related to the source article itself, but rather to the functional definition of religion (which she felt was too inclusive). Perhaps because it was not a definition the authors contributed, she did not include it as a critical commentary of the article.

The other student, Kathryn, who wrote a predominantly negative critique followed a similar pattern. She, too, tended to come back to two concerns as she worked and these became the basis of her written critique. As she worked through the source text to construct her own text, she agrees in principle with the concept quasi-religion and its implications for a contemporary society:

> Ok, so quasi-religion is anything which is... this is good... I like this, anything which organizes... and has organizational dynamics as a religion, but does not necessarily believe in the supernatural or the superempirical...

But interwoven throughout her positive comments are two concerns. The first is her differentiation among the types of quasi-religions, which she thinks has implications for the relevance of the concept to people with different types of problems:

> I don't, I don't know. So there's almost like a primary reason why people became members in the first place. and I think that really, that dif-, I mean that differs from say, something like Scientology because there's no reason, I mean there's no specific...tragedy which has occurred in someone's life to make them join Scientology.

Second, as she works through the text, a contingent concern becomes apparent: if these quasi-religions have different functions that are associated with different purposes in peoples' lives, then can they be useful for children, whose experience is

limited. Thus, quasi religions, or certain types may not be of any relevance to children.

> One thing about quasi-religions....that I think they lack, b-, what they do talk about in the article is that...I'm gonna write this down too, This might be another point I hit upon. I just jot down ideas.....Ok, quasi-religions...they, I mean I don't know if their group, I don't know if a child can be socialized by a quasi-religion because they're so in-, so based on individual and like, I think you're attracted to quasi-religions because of experiences you have had in your past.

Generally, these formed the basis of her negative COMMENTARY for her critique (which was discussed earlier in the report). Like Kelly, Kathryn does not include a negative comment in her written text that she made early on as she began reading the source article. As she began the assignment Kathryn exclaimed that she disagreed with the way the functional definition was discussed. The authors explain that a functional definition construes religion too broadly, but Kathryn thinks differently. She believed that it's just a matter of having different beliefs and that all beliefs are valid, regardless of their religious latitude. Later on she says that her conception is more akin to the quasi-religions and she is satisfied.

Ellen, the student with mixed COMMENTARY verbalizes negative COMMENTARY more than the other students, with discrete and sporadic comments not showing up in her written critique. However, she has one recurring problem with the source text and this forms the basis of her final written text. First, the COMMENTS that do not make their way into her written text.

Ellen verablizes early on that she finds the idea of categorizing organizations as quasi-religions more of the same, that people in academia categorize too much. But she backs off saying that she understands that for the purpose of studying something we have to be able to identify it

> Um, I would think that, I understand that they do need these categories simply for the purposes of studying but they do have to be realistic in that a lot of people probably are not gonna like these nice little categories.

Another example of the type of comment that is not in the critique is that which deals with the different quasi-religious organizations. She comments in particular about Scientology and how strange she finds some of their practices:

> The next one is Scientology....I'm kind of skeptical about this idea of Dianetics because it seems to me as if, ok, maybe you can clear your mind or something that 's troubled you....this one sounds a little bit strange.. up the E-meter...

Thus, this commentary is more personal and is not directly related to how the authors themselves discuss the organizations. Fihally, she comments that she finds the authors' discussion of the functionalist and substantive definitions too simplistic and that she thinks they are oversimplifying them just to make their point. This does not make its way into the text and perhaps this is because it does not fit in with the other negative COMMENTARY that dominates her think-aloud.

As she works, Ellen acknowledges that the concept quasi-religion might be useful and she agrees with the authors on their emergence; however it bothers her that the authors never connect the emergence of these organizations with the consequences of modernity. She expects this discussion in the conclusion and is disappointed when they do not come through:

> I also plan to say that maybe he should have gone, gone on more about this idea of you know, why, um, why it is that people have turned to quasi-religion. Instead of kind of just leaving it hanging there at the end, and you know, going into such detail about the different organizations. I think we kinda got the picture. He didn't need to go into that much detail.

In her written text, her dissatisfaction is constructed as:

> Instead of addressing such pressing issues, the authors bring them up at the end and never develop them. Instead, they spend most of the essay addressing why such groups do or do not want to be considered sacred. I would have been more interested in the causal link between modernity and the emergence of such groups, as well as the nature of the failure of traditional religion.

Essentially, she holds the authors accountable for not providing enough evidence, although she agrees with the idea in principle. Thus, a mixed critique.

Finally, Donna the last of the case-study students writes a more neutral critique, although she does include both negative and positive COMMENTARY. Like Natalie, though, the majority of her verbalizations are related to comprehension, coming to an understanding of the text. The negative commentary she does provide in her written text is verbalized more neutrally in the think-aloud. The comments that she does make that are explicitly negative do not make their way into her text. For example, Donna has a problem with the use of the term American Folk Definition because she thinks this trivializes religion, in particular, the way she conceives of it. Every time this TOPIC comes up in the source article she expresses her dislike very strongly:

> There it is again, contemporary folk definitions of religion. I'm really gettin' irritated by the word "folk."

She also dislikes New Age organizations, associating them with Shirley MacLaine:

> "Shirley MacLaine. I can't stand her. Standing on the beach I am God.

However, these are not the same negative COMMENTARY that appear in her written critique. The negative comments have to do with the ambiguity of the concept and where "the cut-off line is." There is no mention of this until Donna begins writing:

> This definition is very inclusive. It seems to suggest that any group that has strong affiliation and commitment could be classified as a quasi-religion. This is the only real problem I had with the definition and the article. It is not clear where the cut-off line is.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study has shown that there are a number of ways students reconfigure source text information to produce a critique, although not all of these ways are regarded equally in terms of quality. Of importance to this research were the ways that students organized their critiques and the types of information they included in them as they took a critical stance on an important issue in sociology.

Overall, students' written critiques generally were well-organized; that is, they configured TOPICS into thematic chains that were coherent in building a line of reasoning. They accomplished this in several ways. First, students who selected fewer TOPICS in their critiques developed the thematic chains in which the TOPICS were embedded. Although these students selected fewer TOPICS, they developed them in some detail, as seen in the proportion of thematic chains to the total number of content units. Rather than introduce multiple TOPICS, these students limited their evaluation to a few. Another way that students organized their critiques was to select a myriad of TOPICS and to develop them by linking the thematic chains in which they were embedded. In other words, these students chose more information about which to comment and developed their reasoning by connecting different TOPICS to form chunks. Although these structures looked flatter than those of the students who chose fewer TOPICS to develop they were rich in that students connected various and different thematic chains to evaluate the source text.

Both ways of configuring information resulted in fairly tight organizational patterns, although the configuration score for the task of critique seems to be higher when compared to studies in report writing (cf., Spivey, 1983, 1984; Spivey & King, 1989). Although the critiques may not have been as tightly organized as those written for report writing, the raters did not comment about problems with organization and coherence as they discussed their criteria of the ratings. It could be that critique lends itself to selecting more information from the source text about which to comment, without the amount of detail students might provide for constructing reports.

Second, students were told to limit their critiques to two pages, which may have influenced students' decisions to provide detail. They may have opted to include more TOPICS and less detail about them, given the constraint. Both Kathryn and Kelly in their think-alouds mentioned the page limitation. While Kelly verbalized that she opted to leave detail out and stay within the assignment requirement, Kathryn verbalized that she decided to go over the limit. Both students, however, were able to construct well-organized texts, although Kelly's was slightly looser than most. It could be that students at this level have learned how to work within the constraints of tasks. Last, this task was performed in a classroom where students may have assumed shared knowledge. Thus, students may not have felt that they needed to provide as much detail since all members of the classroom, including the teacher (who was the audience) had read the article and would talk about it later as a group.

It would also be premature to assume that the shorter texts were judged to be of less quality than the longer ones. For example, the critique that received the highest summed rating (of a possible score of 20) had only 18 units (and received a score of 18), whereas another text with 46 units received a summed rating of only 8. It might be that students' treatment of the TOPICS they selected contributed more to quality than length alone.

More important in the quality ratings was students' inclusion of NEGATIVE COMMENTARY and its disciplinary SOURCE OF SUPPORT. Critiques fell into four different categories, which may be thought of as falling along different points on a continuum. One end of this continuum represents the critiques that received the highest quality ratings and the other end represents the critiques that received the lowest quality ratings. In between are two other types of critique whose holistic scores fell in a middle range.

Critiques that received the highest quality ratings were those that generally provided predominantly negative COMMENTARY on the source article and backed it up with disciplinary SOURCE OF SUPPORT. Generally, these students' found problems with the authors' reasoning as it was signaled in the source article, found gaps in the authors' thinking about the concept, or took issue with the authors' theoretical grounding of the concept quasi-religion. These students were able to make their discussion relevant to the community of sociology by applying sociological criteria to their evaluation.

Students who received the lowest quality ratings were those that provided a summary of the main points of the article and then added their own opinion using personal SOURCE OF SUPPORT, or they recounted personal experiences related to some of the issues raised in the article before providing some type of evaluative COMMENTARY that was based on personal SOURCE OF SUPPORT. These students were more likely to, as one rater said, "pontificate," adjudicating the worth of the concept quasi-religion based on their own beliefs or experiences. These students did not speak to the larger audience of sociology, for whom the source article was intended. Rather, these students' texts came across as limited in relevance for an audience interested in sociological issues because they focused more on their own personal issues. Thus, these students applied their own personal criteria to sociological issues.

The texts that fell in between were of two kinds: 1) those that demonstrated a knowledge of sociological principles as students provided critical insights into the TOPIC of quasi-religion or particular points in the article and 2) those that summarized the source article and then took a stance. The critiques on these two points of the continuum were varied, with more of a mixture of positive, negative and suspended COMMENTARY. In the first case, students tended to use suspended COMMENTARY to provide an overview of the article and then bring up particular aspects of TOPICS with which they agreed or disagreed. In the second case, students tended to include more suspended COMMENTARY, not as an overview, but to explain why quasi-religious organizations existed. They then provided a few negative or positive instances of COMMENTARY to demonstrate how

they valued these groups. Critiques in both of these categories exhibited more diversity, too, in terms of the type of SOURCE OF SUPPORT they used to back up their COMMENTARY. In some cases, students might have more disciplinary support, some more personal, and some provided more balanced support. The critiques in this range on the continuum received ratings that were more varied. In other words, some of these texts may have been rated high by one rater and low by another. In this middle range, there was less consistency across ratings than for the highest and lowest quality groups of critique.

All students critiqued the source article providing some type of suspended COMMENTARY. That is, all students knew to provide some sort of context by which a reader could put other types of COMMENTARY (positive or negative) into a context. And students knew to provide some sort of evaluative COMMENTARY on the source article; for there was not one written text that did not have either positive or negative COMMENTARY. Still, in filling the rhetorical space of critique, students performed a different type of task, not in kind, but in degree.

The raters were more consistently sensitive to those that measured up to what constitutes a quality critique by their standards and to those that explicitly did not measure up to their standards. Raters awarded students higher quality ratings if they found weaknesses in disciplinary aspects of the article or provided some new way of thinking about the TOPIC. In this way, students may have been demonstrating not only a mastery of knowledge but an awareness of some of the issues surrounding theoretical debates in the discipline. When students provided evaluative COMMENTARY that was based upon their own personal system of beliefs raters penalized them. They were not adhering to disciplinary standards but were instead generating their own frames of reference, which were of little use to a community of sociologists. Finally, the texts that fell in between may have been more difficult to assess because they were more mixed, demonstrating some aspects of critique that might be valued, but at the same time demonstrating a lack of command over them. Thus, some raters may have been inclined to focus on what students could do and some may have focused on what they could not do.

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Appendix A
Sample of Classroom Discourse

This excerpt of classroom discourse takes place at the beginning of the semester. Pseudonyms have been given to all students.

Teacher: I'm gonna do my name thing. (She goes through and calls each student by name). It'll probably take me another time or two before I remember all of you. Today I want to go through some important points and add material not from the book. Let's go back to, from the first chapter. What are the various dimensions of religion? Remember the dimensions of religion McGuire talks about? What forms does religion take? There are four she mentions. Enya? There's a danger to learning your names.

Enya: Religious beliefs
Ann: Rituals
Donna: Experience
Sally: Community

The teacher writes these on the board as the students mention them:

Religious beliefs
Rituals
Experience
Community

Teacher: Let's go over them and take some examples. What are some examples of one? Shana?
Shana: Makes a rule make sense?
Teacher: Sheaumus?
Sheamus: Something we hold onto that's right.
Teacher: Something we believe is right, with a capital R and Truth with a capital T. Kathryn?
Kathryn: It dictates our action.
Sally: Gives sense of good or bad.
Teacher: In addition, what else?
Joanne: Gives meaning to life.
Teacher: Beliefs are a set of propositions about what's true, right. It gives a sense of ..... (She pauses as if she is giving a cue for students to finish her sentence)... It is an 'O' word.
Sally: (*inaudible*)
Joanne: Organization.
Teacher: Shorten that. Order. (writes order next to beliefs on the board)

Religious beliefs ORDER
Rituals
Experience
Community

Appendix B
Text Template

1. Quasi-religion
   1. It is the topic of this essay
2. Quasi-religion
   2. It is defined and its interpretation is justified in the first section of the essay
3. Organizations-quasi-religious
   3. Examples are provided in the second section of article
4. Organizations-quasi-religious
   4. Their features are then delineated and used to explain why they place themselves between the sacred and the secular
5. Organizations-quasi-religious
   5. Their significance is assessed and what their study says about changes in the understanding of religion in contemporary America is summarized in the conclusion of the essay
6. Quasi-religion-definition
   6. It is contingent upon a definition of religion
7. Religion-definition
   7. It is debated by functional and substantive supporters
8. Religion-definition-functional
   8. It emphasizes an "encompassing system of meaning" or the ability to "relate man to the ultimate conditions of his existence"
9. Religion-definition-substantive
   9. It makes reference to the sacred and the supernatural
10. Religion-definition-functional-advantage
    10. It allows sociologists to look at beliefs that resemble religious phenomena
11. Religion-definition-functional-disadvantage
    11. The concept of religion is so broad it becomes meaningless
12. Religion-definition-functional-disadvantage
    12. It lumps together the nonsupernatural and supernatural, whose consequences may differ sociologically
13. Religion-definition-substantive-advantage
    13. It doesn't lump such phenomena together
14. Religion-definition-substantive-advantage
    14. It accords more with American folk definitions of religion, more commonsense definitions
15. Quasi-religion-definition (1)
    15. It is a compromise between substantive and functional supporters' views

16. Quasi-religion-definition (1)
    16. It refers to activities and organizations that involve expressions of ultimate concern, or organizational dynamics similar to those of religious organizations (functionally defined), but that don't have a belief in the supernatural or superempirical

17. Quasi-religion definition (1)
    17. Running and the pursuit of health are examples

18. Quasi-religion-definition (1)
    18. Radical political groups, weight-loss groups, human potential groups and companies like Amway are examples

19. Religion-definition-substantive-disadvantage
    19. It makes sociological analysis slave to commonsense definitions of reality

20. Religion-definition-American folk
    20. It focuses on a transcendent deity ("God")

21. Religion-definition-American folk
    21. It centers around churches and worships a transcendent deity

22. Religion-definition-American folk
    22. It implicitly reflects a transcendent worldview that believes that there is an empirically available natural world governed by laws

23. "Religious"-definition-American Folk
    23. It is a person who believes in an unseen world not governed by empirical laws

24. "Nonreligious"-definition-American Folk
    24. It is a person who does not believe in an unseen world

25. "Religious"-definition-American Folk
    25. It is made anomalous by the definition of religion as meaning "making reference to the transcendent deity of the Judeo-Christian tradition"

26. Religion-definition-substantive
    26. It buys into the American Folk definition that equates religion and the transcendent

27. Religion-definition-substantive-American folk
    27. Transcendence is assumed with the belief that it is possible to distinguish between the sacred and secular

28. Religion- definitions-substantive-functional-error
    28. They assume religion exists independent of peoples' conception of it

29. Religion- definitions-substantive-functional-error
    29. They are objectivist in intent

30. Religion- definitions-substantive-functional-error
    30. They determine objectively whether a given phenomena is religious or nonreligious

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31. Religion-definitions-substantive-functional-error
    31. They should be replaced with a subjectivist position on religion/nonreligion

32. Religion-definition-subjectivist
    32. The proper study of religion is what people do when they think they're doing religion

33. Religion-definition-objectivist
    33. It is uninteresting to separate the religious and nonreligious

34. Religion-definition-subjectivist
    34. People's conceptualization of religious overrides sociological categories and determines their "religious/nonreligious" behavior

35. Religion-definition-subjectivist
    35. The view of a proper definition of religion leads to a different conceptualization of quasi-religion

36. Quasi-religion-definition (2)
    36. It doesn't reflect characteristics of the secular or sacred

37. Quasi-religion-definition (2)
    37. It has an anomalous status, given contemporary folk definitions of religion

38. Quasi-religion-definition (2)
    38. It refers to organizations that are viewed as "sort-of" religious by themselves or others

39. Quasi-religion-definition (2)
    39. It uses organizational and ideological tension and ambiguity regarding the group's worldview, perspective, and regimen to facilitate affiliation and commitment

40. Quasi-religion-definition (2)
    40. It rides the fence between the sacred and the secular

41. Quasi-religion-definition (2)
    41. The religious/nonreligious nature depends on the emphasis of leaders and members in different circumstances

42. Organizations-quasi-religious
    42. They include self-help groups and new religious movements

43. Organizations-quasi-religious-self-help group-Alcoholics Anonymous
    43. Students have made analogies between its structure, activities, dynamics, and ideology of religious organizations

44. Organizations-quasi-religious-self-help group-Alcoholics Anonymous
    44. Its religious characteristics include a conception of the sacred, ceremonies and rituals, creedal statements, conversion experiences, and an A.A. philosophy of life

45. Organizations-quasi-religious-self-help group-Alcoholics Anonymous
    45. Its religious features are obvious but its status as a religion is denied

46. Organizations-quasi-religious-self-help group-Alcoholics Anonymous
    46. Its denial as a religion is ambiguous

47. Organizations-quasi-religious-self-help group-Alcoholics Anonymous
    47. Its members and literature say it's spiritual, not religious

48. Organizations-quasi-religious-self-help group-Alcoholics Anonymous
    48. "Twelve Steps" mentions a "Higher Power"

49. Organizations-quasi-religious-self-help group-Alcoholics Anonymous
    49. The term "Higher Power" indicates a range of interpretations from the traditional Judeo-Christian God to the group itself

50. Organizations-quasi-religious-self-help group-Alcoholics Anonymous
    50. The range of views allow members to band together under one umbrella

51. Organizations-quasi-religious-self-help groups
    51. They are characterized by similar ideological ambiguity

52. Organizations-quasi-religious-self-help group-Compassionate Friends
    52. It was founded by clergymen for parents who have experienced the death of a child

53. Organizations-quasi-religious-self-help group-Compassionate Friends
    53. It has specific ritualistic meetings and emphasizes that group sharing of "experimental knowledge" allows for the transcendence of human condition

54. Organizations-quasi-religions-self-help group-Compassionate Friends
    54. Members develop meaningfulness and purpose through sharing and empathy

55. Organizations-quasi-religious-self-help group-Compassionate Friends
    55. The interpretation of death occurs within a religious framework

56. Organizations-quasi-religious-self-help group-Compassionate Friends
    56. Theological explanations are avoided because of group diversity

57. Organizations-quasi-religious-self-help group-Compassionate Friends
    57. The literature declares no religious philosophic ideology

58. Organizations-quasi-religious-human potential movement
    58. They are easily conceptualized as quasi-religions

59. Organizations-quasi-religious-human potential movement-est
    59. It remains one of the best known [in this movement]

60. Organizations-quasi-religious-human potential movement-est
    60. It states people are in control of their own experience

61. Organizations-quasi-religious-human potential movement-est
    61. It communicates epistemological, psychological, and psychoanalytic facts about human experience, not religious morals and beliefs

62. Organizations-quasi-religious-self-help groups
    62. They emphasize group unity to transcend typical existence

63. Organizations-quasi-religious-human potential movement
    63. The quasi-religious-nature is expressed in the idea of the "transpersonal"

64. Organizations-quasi-religious-human potential movement
    64. "Transpersonal "refers to experiences which transcend typical human experience

65. Organizations-quasi-religious-human potential movement
    65. Members say God is not a meaningful concept, eschew the term religion, and employ the term spiritual to describe experience

66. Organizations-quasi-religious-human potential movement
    66. They premise that greater awareness and perception allow for one to become spiritualized

67. Organizations-quasi-religious-human potential movement
    67. A Forum spokesperson claimed it similar to a religion

68. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship
    68. It sees itself as a scientific religious philosophy aimed at uncovering the nature of "spiritual laws"

69. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship
    69. Members solve personal problems through meditation, prayer, positive thinking, spiritual formulas, and making use of proper spiritual laws

70. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship
    70. Members are not expected to believe on faith

71. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship
    71. Members are encouraged to verify concepts through their own experience

72. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship
    72. A study group was called a class, not a congregation

73. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship
    73. Participants were called students, not members

74. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship
    74. The ideas participants discussed were called theories, concepts, and ideas, not beliefs

75. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Scientology
    75. It began in 1949 as Dianetics and presented itself as a modern science of mental health

76. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Dianetics
    76. The basic premise of Dianetics was that normal minds are troubled and less effective because of past painful events called "engrams"

77. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Dianetics
    77. The purpose of Dianetic therapy was to restore "engrams" to consciousness and erase them from the "reactive mind," allowing the "analytical mind" to develop to full capacity

78. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Dianetics
    78. A person whose reactive mind had been erased was known as "clear"

79. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Scientology
    79. It was founded in 1952 by L. Ron Hubbard

80. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Scientology
    80. It differs from Dianetics theoretically, technologically, and in its self-presentation

81. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Scientology
    81. It added the concept of "Thetan," a being of pure spirit that allowed itself to become matter, that has been reincarnated in successive human bodies and that represents one's true self

82. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Scientology
    82. The meaning of "clear" was changed to achieving a better understanding of one's true nature as Thetan, and the process of becoming clear was aided by the "E-meter"

83. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Scientology
    83. It was declared a religion by Hubbard

84. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Scientology
    84. Hubbard has been accused of creating a religious front to avoid paying taxes, to protect himself from fraudulent uses of the E-meter, and to gain legitimacy from the wider community

85. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Scientology
    85. Scientologists describe Scientology as an "applied religious philosophy"

86. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Scientology
    86. Much of Scientology's ethos is secular

87. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Scientology
    87. The principles are presented as axioms, not as creedal statements, and services are rendered for a fee to customers

88. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Scientology
    88. Some official pronouncements describe it as a science, not a religion

89. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Scientology
    89. It was described by Hubbard in 1963 as the "science of how to change conditions. . . . And it is the ONLY science of improvement Man has that really works."

90. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Scientology
    90. Hubbard has distinguished between Scientology proper, which includes therapeutic services, and Para Scientology, which includes religious aspects

91. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Scientology
    91. Hubbard advises ministers to stay away from Para Scientology with potential converts

92. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Scientology
    92. Hubbard advises ministers to emphasize that man has a spiritual side and that Scientology solves social problems

93. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Transcendental Meditation
    93. It has gone to court to assert it is not a religion

94. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Transcendental Meditation
    94. It appears to be religious in nature and derives from Hindu religious tradition

95. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Transcendental Meditation
    95. Until 1979, TM tried to present a secular face to the world, but the U.S. Court of Appeals affirmed a lower court decision that TM was religious in character and couldn't be taught in public schools

96. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Transcendental Meditation
    96. It presented itself as a rationalized, streamlined method of achieving happiness and personal efficacy through meditation

97. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Transcendental Meditation
    97. It presented itself as a body of scientifically validated techniques, and was successful in attesting to its efficacy in scientific journals

98. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Transcendental Meditation
    98. It was offered as classes like a school subject to be mastered by students

99. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Transcendental Meditation
    99. It presented itself to the public as not entirely secular

100. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Transcendental Meditation
    100. The classes began with a traditional invocation

101. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Transcendental Mediation
    101. Introductory lectures appeared secular, while advanced lectures contained religious elements

102. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Transcendental Meditation
    102. In 1977, TM signaled a more religious self-presentation with the announcement of "Siddhis," performances of higher states of consciousness

103. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Transcendental Meditation
    103. It promised meditation could give initiates the ability to become invisible, to levitate, and to move objects through mental powers

104. Organizations-quasi-religious-occult tradition-Transcendental Meditation
    104. The organization still exists but its growth is different than it was in the 60's and 70's

105. Organizations-quasi-religious-features
105. The illustrations are limited to thumbnail sketches due to space constraints

106. Organizations-quasi-religious-features
106. The organizations are ambiguous to adherents, prospective adherents, and the general public

107. Organizations-quasi-religious-features
107. They present themselves as "sort-of" religious and/or "sort-of" secular

108. Organizations-quasi-religious-features
108. They represent an array of beliefs, practices, and organizational structures, but they share some salient features

109. Organizations-quasi-religious-features
109. They don't sponsor activities that take the form associated with the folk definition of religion

110. Organizations-quasi-religious-features
110. None of these groups have services

111. Organizations-quasi-religious-features
111. Rather, they offer classes, do sessions or hold meetings

112. Organizations-quasi-religious-features
112. They don't focus attention on a concretely defined supreme being

113. Organizations-quasi-religious-features
113. In AA, the "Higher Power" may be God, but then it might not be

114. Organizations-quasi-religious-features
114. Scientology's theology deals more with abstract forces than deities

115. Organizations-quasi-religious-features
115. SSF talks about spiritual laws, divinity within oneself, and not a personal relationship with God

116. Organizations-quasi-religious-goals
116. Their primary goal is to provide a therapeutic service

117. Organizations-quasi-religious-goals
117. Presenting a revealed truth is subordinated to the goal of helping people make their lives better

118. Organizations-quasi-religious-goals
118. Their ideology is pervaded by a pragmatic theme

119. Organizations-quasi-religious-goals
119. What is true is not as important as what works

120. Organizations-quasi-religious-goals
120. For AA it is achieving sobriety and helping others achieve it

121. Organizations-quasi-religious-goals
121. AA members are urged not to understand everything, but to get on with the program

122. Organizations-quasi-religious-goals
122. AA has a saying, which is: "Utilize, don't analyze"

123. Organizations-quasi-religious-goals
123. The goal of Occult and New Age groups is also what works

124. Organizations-quasi-religious-goals
124. Jach Pursel, a channeler, said in response to the belief in Lazarus: Lazarus could be different part of me and if you want to believe that, it's OK, because what really matters is the value gained from it

125. Organizations-quasi-religious-goals
125. While the ultimate goal is personal betterment, it is made clear that spiritual growth and the transcending of limits of oneself are a necessary means to an end

126. Organizations-quasi-religious-goals
126. In AA one must give oneself up to a "Higher Power" before one can achieve sobriety

127. Organizations-quasi-religious-goals
127. In Compassionate Friends, parents must transcend the human condition to cope with grief

128. Organizations-quasi-religious-goals
128. In SSF the goal is to achieve spiritual growth by identifying oneself with the divine inner self

129. Organizations-quasi-religious
129. They are Identity Transforming Organizations (ITO'S)

130. Organizations-quasi-religious-ITO's
130. They encourage adherents to undergo radical shifts in their worldview and identity

131. Organizations-quasi-religious-ITO's
131. They encapsulate the individual within the confines of the organization to provide situations to help form a new identity

132. Organizations-quasi-religious-ITO's
132. A commitment to them requires that people identify their goals and interests with those of the organization

133. Organizations-quasi-religious-ITO'S
133. A person subordinates the ego to the will of the group and the person feels "institutionalized awe" for the power of the group through the commitment mechanisms of mortification

134. Organizations-quasi-religious-ITO'S
134. They are ITO's from the perspective of core members, but not short term clients

135. Organizations-quasi-religious-ITO'S
135. MSIA offers a series of courses called Insight

136. Organizations-quasi-religious-ITO'S
136. In MSIA the first two courses (Insight I and II) are secular in tone but the third course (Insight III) introduces advanced students to the mystical teachings of founder Jean-Roger

137. Organizations-quasi-religious-ITO'S
137. Their ideologies are based on scientific evidence

138. Organizations-quasi-religious-ITO'S
138. TM, Scientology, and SSF claim to have solid scientific grounding

139. Organizations-quasi-religious-ITO'S
139. AA claims scientific backing for its assertion that alcoholism is a "physical, mental, and spiritual disease"

140. Organizations-quasi-religious-ITO'S
140. New Age-crystals emanate an electromagnetic field that has an ability to couple with the field of the human body, they help the human form go into more harmonious alignment, and they realign the symmetry in the human form

141. Organizations-quasi-religious-ideological ambiguity
141. They are ambiguous about whether they are religious or secular

142. Organizations-quasi-religious-ideological ambiguity
142. There are benefits and drawbacks to being associated with the term religious

143. Organizations-quasi-religious-ideological ambiguity
143. This section of the article provides reasons why organizations might choose to present themselves as religious and/or secular

144. Organizations-quasi-religious-ideological ambiguity
144. In this section of the article the relationship between organizational features and ideological ambiguity becomes clear

145. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage
145. An advantage exists for organizations successful in calling themselves religious

146. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-financial
146. In the U.S. it carries with it a financial advantage

147. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-financial
147. They can solicit tax-deductible contributions

148. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-financial
148. Property they own is tax-exempt

149. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-civil and labor
149. It makes them exempt from certain regulations dictated by civil rights and labor legislation

150. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-civil and labor

150. They may take religion into consideration in hiring employees

151. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-financial
151. L. Ron Hubbard was accused of declaring Scientology as a religion for financial reasons

152. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-financial
152. Scientology was rejected as a religious organization on the grounds that it is organized to make a profit

153. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-financial
153. Non-profit charities are required to file annual financial reports but churches are not

154. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-nonfinancial
154. There are some nonfinancial practical reasons to claim a religious label

155. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-nonfinancial
155. The clergy is exempt from military service and members can claim conscientious-objector status more easily

156. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-nonfinancial
156. Organizations can conduct healing and therapy practices without fear or scrutiny by regulatory agencies

157. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-nonfinancial
157. In 1963 the FDA raided the Founding Church of Scientology in DC and seized their E-meters, charging that Scientology was making false claims about their therapeutic efficacy

158. Organizations-quasi-religion-religious label-advantage-nonfinancial
158. Scientology argued successfully before the U.S Court of appeals that because it qualified as a religion, the E-meter was not subject to FDA regulation

159. Organizations-quasi-religion-religious label-advantage-legitimacy
159. The most practical advantage has to do with the legitimacy conferred upon groups

160. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-legitimacy
160. Organizations and leaders are held in high esteem and can benefit from the respectability the label implies

161. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-legitimacy
161. L. Ron Hubbard said that "parliaments don't attack religions"

162. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-existential
162. Organizations may have existential reasons for representing themselves as religious

163. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-existential
163. They claim the label because it feels right to them

164. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-existential
164. ITO'S create an atmosphere of institutionalized awe, giving members a sense of reality that exists beyond themselves

165. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-existential
    165. Institutionalized awe is almost inevitably expressed in superempirical terms

166. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-existential
    166. The sense that one is nothing compared to the power and majesty of the group is generally experienced and expressed through religious idiom

167. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-existential
    167. This observation is reminiscent of Durkheim's argument that the source of reverence for the sacred is to be found in the awe inspired by participation in the collectivity

168. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-existential
    168. Members may describe their group as spiritual or religious because the experiences they have within the group strike them as being close to or identical to what they understand religious experience to be

169. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-existential
    169. Group experiences may explain why core members of certain groups see the group as religious while fringe members do not

170. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-advantage-existential
    170. As adepts get more involved they may experience more heightened levels of transcendence and institutional awe and may come to feel that religious symbolism provides the most suitable means of expressing this

171. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-disadvantage
    171. Practical and existential reasons are discussed in this part of the essay

172. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-disadvantage-practical
    172. The authors begin with the practical reasons

173. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-disadvantage-practical
    173. The prototypical form of the religious organization in the United States is the denomination

174. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-disadvantage-practical
    174. For an organization to present itself as a religious organization is tantamount to presenting itself as one denomination among many

175. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-disadvantage-practical
    175. TM avoided the religious label to have the broadest recruitment base possible

176. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-disadvantage-practical
    176. AA and Compassionate Friends may fear that being too closely identified with a particular creedal statement might alienate some individuals who would benefit from membership

177. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-disadvantage-practical
177. The label may be viewed negatively, especially by those who do not espouse the transcendent worldview that is recognized by the American folk definition as real religion

178. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-disadvantage-practical
178. A spokesperson from Forum explains that one reason speakers avoid identifying Forum as a religion is that some people might "be turned off by the word religion"

179. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-disadvantage-practical
179. There are some services the government may not provide because of the Constitutional prohibition against the establishment of religion

180. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-disadvantage-practical
180. Once TM was declared a religion it couldn't offer instruction in the public schools

181. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-disadvantage-practical
181. Many of AA recruits are referred by the courts

182. Organizations-quasi-religious-religious label-disadvantage-practical
182. The courts would be less likely to refer those convicted of DWI and other offenses if AA were thought to be a religious organization

183. Organizations-quasi-religious-nonreligious label-advantage-legitimacy
183. A nonreligious label bestows a different type of legitimacy than a religious label does

184. Organizations-quasi-religious-nonreligious label-advantage-legitimacy
184. To be accepted as legitimate therapy, they may have to distance themselves from their more religious tendencies

185. Organizations-quasi-religious-nonreligious label-advantage-financial
185. It may also confer financial benefits

186. Organizations-quasi-religious-nonreligious label-advantage-financial
186. Religions don't qualify for third-party medical payments while therapies do

187. Organizations-quasi-religion-nonreligious label-advantage-business
187. Many human potential organizations offer their services to corporations interested in increasing worker production

188. Organizations-quasi-religious-nonreligious label-advantage-business
188. Businesses are more likely to hire a secular consulting firm than a religious sect

189. Organizations-quasi-religious-nonreligious label-advantage-existential
189. There may be existential reasons for rejecting the religious label

190. Organizations-quasi-religious-nonreligious label-advantage-existential
190. Members join for therapeutic benefits

191. Organizations-quasi-religion-nonreligious label-advantage-existential
191. Worldly orientation leaders and followers who associate religion with otherworldly concerns may not feel the label fits

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192. Organizations-quasi-religious-nonreligious label-advantage-existential
192. Religion in America is often compartmentalized

193. Organizations-quasi-religious-nonreligious label-advantage-existential
193. Religion in America is relegated to a particular sphere of life (church on Sundays) and insulated from others (work)

194. Organizations-quasi-religious-nonreligious label-advantage-existential
194. They see it as their mission to reform all of members' lives and not just part of them

195. Organizations-quasi-religious-nonreligious label-advantage-existential
195. Adherents think of their own beliefs as being scientific and may find the religious label inappropriate because they think of religion as unscientific

196. Organizations-quasi-religious-nonreligious label-advantage-existential
196. Adherents of quasi-religious belief systems may think of religions as being mutually exclusive

197. Organizations-quasi-religious-nonreligious label-advantage-existential
197. One cannot be a Catholic and a Presbyterian, but a member of SSF can be a Presbyterian

198. Organizations-quasi-religious-nonreligious label-advantage-existential
198. Such a person might conclude that if Presbyterianism is a religion SSF must not be

199. Organizations-quasi-religious-significance
199. How important are they?

200. Organizations-quasi-religious-significance
200. Reliable statistics on membership are not available but impressionistic evidence suggests that the appeal is great

201. Organizations-quasi-religious-significance
201. Hurley reports that AA had 804,00 American members in 1986

202. Organizations-quasi-religious-significance
202. Hurley asserts that there are twelve million people in five hundred thousand self-help groups, some of which would qualify as quasi-religions

203. Organizations-quasi-religious-significance
203. Scientology claims a membership of over six million, but outside observers estimate it's below one million

204. Organizations-quasi-religious-significance
204. Almost a million people had been initiated into TM by 1977

205. Organizations-quasi-religious-significance
205. Melton calls the occult groups the most important segment of American alternative religion

206. Organizations-quasi-religious-significance
206. Shirley MacLaine's book on New Age themes sold over 8 million copies, and one quarter of all Americans say they believe in reincarnation

207. Organizations-quasi-religious-significance
207. Lifespring, Arica Training, and est can each boast that 200,000 people have been trained

208. Organizations-quasi-religious-significance
208. In a survey of the Montreal area, Bird and Reimer found that 31.7 percent of their sample had some involvement in "new religious and para-religious movements," most of which would be classified as quasi-religions

209. Organizations-quasi-religious-implications
209. The American folk definition is beginning to lose its hold over us and the line between religion and nonreligion is getting fuzzier

210. Organizations-quasi-religious-implications
210. What does the appeal of quasi-religions and the blurring of distinctions between religion and nonreligion tell about religious trends in American society?

211. Organizations-quasi-religious-implications
211. Religious trends in American society is worthy of discussion, but is confined to a few suggestive comments

212. Organizations-quasi-religious-implications
212. The appeal of quasi-religions suggests that large numbers of people are not finding satisfaction with the transcendent worldviews offered by traditional religious options

213. Organizations-quasi-religious-implications
213. Dissatisfaction with a transcendent worldview may be due in part to the fact that globalization has resulted in greater exposure to religious ideas outside the Judeo-Christian tradition

214. Organizations-quasi-religious-implications
214. Dissatisfaction with a transcendent worldview may also be due to increased privatization of American society, which may have lead to people looking inside themselves instead of outside themselves

215. Organizations-quasi-religious-implications
215. Their practical orientation suggests that a number of Americans feel out of control, who feel that the est trainer is right when he tells them," Your lives don't work, assholes"

216. Organizations-quasi-religious-implications
216. The appeal to science in many of these suggests that, although modernization may have lead to alienation and loss of meaning, the new quest for meaning is heavily influenced by the modernization and secularization of contemporary society against which it revolts

Appendix C
Educational Status Questionnaire

The following is a list of persons who agreed to participate in the critique study. In order to receive your check ($25 or $5, depending on the type of participation) and an update on the study, I need to make sure your address is correct. Please find your name (listed ALPHABETICALLY) and make any corrections, or if there is no address, please provide one. Also, please mark whether you are a sociology major and your current status at the university (senior, junior, sophomore, freshman).

---

1. Name
   Address

   Sociology Major: Yes ___ No ___

   Current Status: Freshman ___ Sophomore ___ Junior ___ Senior ___

---

2. Name
   Address

   Sociology Major: Yes ___ No ___

   Current Status: Freshman ___ Sophomore ___ Junior ___ Senior ___

---

3. Name
   Address

   Sociology Major: Yes ___ No ___

   Current Status: Freshman ___ Sophomore ___ Junior ___ Senior ___

---

4. Name
   Address

   Sociology Major: Yes ___ No ___

   Current Status: Freshman ___ Sophomore ___ Junior ___ Senior ___

Appendix D
Case-Study Questionnaire

Thank you for participating in this study. With this questionnaire, I want to learn what you think about the academic field of sociology. *Your answers are confidential, and will not be shown to your instructor.*

Name _____ Student ID number _____

1. Gender M_____ F_____ 2. Age_____

3. Year in school _____

4. Current major/specialty is _____

5. I am committed to this major:

_____ 0% _____ 25% _____ 50% _____75% _____ 100%

6. Why are you taking this course? Please explain. (Use the back of the sheet if you need more room to elaborate on your response.)

7. Please list the sociology courses below that you have taken in college. Please list courses you have taken in religious studies on the back of this sheet.

Course Name	Date Taken	Grade

Name _____

8. Below is a list of some of the types of writing that you may have encountered in your sociology courses throughout your academic career. Please place a check mark next to the types of writing you have done in these classes.

___ multiple choice exams

___ essay exams

___ book reviews

___ critical essays (analysis of an article, book, theory, etc.)

___ surveys of the literature (review of the research that has been done on a topic)

___ research proposals

___ research papers or reports (observational or experimental studies you conducted)

___ other (please list below)

9. Please place a check mark next to the sources listed below that you consider to be influential to your education in sociology thus far. Provide their names and/or titles and briefly explain how they influenced you.

		Names or Titles	How Did They Influence You?
___	Authors		
___	Theorists		
___	Books		
___	Articles		
___	Teachers		
___	Classes		
___	Other (Explain)		

Name _____

10. a. Are there different theoretical groups in sociology?

____ yes ____ no ____ don't know

b. If yes, please list them.

c. If you responded yes, which of the theoretical groups in sociology do you think you identify with the most? Why?

11. Please place a check mark next to the activities related to sociology with which you have been involved. Include the roles and/or responsibilities you have had in these activities.

		Name of Activity	Roles/Responsibilities You Had
____	Organizations		
____	Activities		
____	Internships		
____	Practicums		
____	Jobs/Work-Related Experiences		
____	Other (Explain)		

Name _____

12. How do you define the field of sociology?

13 a.. Are you majoring in sociology?

_____ yes _____ no

b. If you responded yes, please explain why you are majoring in sociology.

Appendix E
Knowledge Form

Please write down what comes to mind when you think about the term **QUASI-RELIGION**. Put down what you know about it. Lists are fine. You don't need to write in complete sentences.

DO NOT TURN THE PAGE UNTIL TOLD

Please write down what comes to mind when you think about the **SUBSTANTIVE DEFINITION OF RELIGION**. Put down what you know about it. Lists are fine. You don't need to write in complete sentences.

DO NOT TURN THE PAGE UNTIL TOLD

Please write down what comes to mind when you think about the **FUNCTIONAL DEFINITION OF RELIGION.** Put down what you know about it. Lists are fine. You don't need to write in complete sentences.

Appendix F
Reading-Writing Log

Record on this log sheet every time you work on this assignment. "Work" means reading the article; thinking seriously; toying with ideas; talking to someone about the paper; planning or otherwise preparing for writing the paper, actually writing, or revising.

Each time you work, write in the date, the approximate number of minutes spent, and the activity done. Also write down any explanation about what you did. You may not end up using all the activity categories, and you may use several categories for one entry.

ACTIVITY	EXPLANATION OF ACTIVITY
A. Talked to someone	**(Who-- a classmate? a teacher? a friend? etc.)**
B. Read article	**(What parts or pages?)**
C. Made notes on article	**(For what purpose did you take notes?)**
D. Planned the paper	**(Explain- e.g. thought seriously for a while, wrote down ideas of my own, made an outline, reviewed notes, etc.)**
E. Drafted: wrote part or all of draft	**(Which draft? First? Second? What part or parts did you work on?)**
F. Revised my draft	**(What did you change? What part of your plan or your draft changed?)**
G. Read class notes	**(What parts?)**
H. Thought about topic	**(What were you thinking?)**
I. Read my notes on article	**(What parts? For what purpose?)**
J. Other _____	**(Explain)**

DAY	TIME SPENT	ACTIVITY	EXPLANATION OF ACTIVITY
EXAMPLE #1			
2/27	25 minutes	E. Drafted	Wrote the introduction, draft #1
EXAMPLE #2			
2/28	10 minutes	G. Reread introduction	Not sure if it explains what I mean
	20 minutes	A. Talked to someone	Asked roommate to read it & see what he/she thinks

Appendix G
Directions for the Discourse-Based Evaluation

For this task, you will need a pen or pencil and a working tape recorder.

Now that you have completed your critique of *On the Margins of the Sacred*, take a few minutes to go back through and read your paper. Go back once more, but this time pay particular attention to parts of your text that you think make your critique stronger. **Mark** those places with a (+). Now go back and pay particular attention to the places in your critique that you think make your critique weaker. **Mark** those places with a (--).

Next, turn the tape recorder on. Look at the places in your written critique where you have marked a (+). **Explain** how these places make your critique stronger. Now, look at the places in your written critique where you have marked a (--). **Explain** how these places make your critique weaker.

Appendix H
Consent Form for Case-Study Students

This semester I, Maureen Mathison, am conducting a study for the Center for the Study of Writing, at The University of California, Berkeley, and Carnegie Mellon University. I will be examining students' written critiques of a sociological article, which is one of the assignments for this course, the Sociology of Religion. Each participant in the research study will:

1. Complete a brief questionnaire regarding their background in sociology.
2. Complete a brief questionnaire regarding the topic of the critique.
3. Keep a record of the time spent on the writing of their critique.
4. Complete a brief questionnaire regarding the writing of their critique.
5. Allow the researcher to analyze the critique they write for this class.
6. Allow the researcher to obtain entrance test scores (e.g. SAT) and grade point average
7. Allow the researcher to use excerpts from their critique, questionnaires, and interviews in publications about research with the understanding that their identities will not be revealed at any time.

The above information will remain confidential.
It will not be shared with the instructor of the course.
It will have no bearing on course performance or grade.

Toward the end of the semester, I will provide you with an update of the study. When I have completed the project, I will be happy to share the research results with you.

If you are willing to participate in this research, please read and sign the consent form below.

I agree to participate in all the procedures listed above. I understand that my identity will be protected and that the instructor will only see my paper, as it is a class assignment. I also understand that my name will not be revealed when data from the research are presented in publication. I give the researcher permission to use excerpts from what I write and say without identifying me. If, however, at any time I wish to terminate my participation in the research I have the right to do so without penalty. I further have the right to contact the following person and report my objections, either orally or in writing:

Dr. Paul Christiano
608 Warner Hall
Carnegie Mellon University
Telephone: 268-6685

Name: _____
(please print)

Signature: _____

Local Telephone Number: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Date: _____

NAME _____

From the people participating in this study, I will need volunteers who will complete some additional tasks outside of the classroom. These volunteers will agree to:

1. Provide a think aloud protocol as they work on their paper in their own working environment. (This means that at certain points while working, students will verbalize out loud what they are thinking as they read and write.)

2. Participate in a 30 minute interview after the paper is finished

Volunteers will receive $20 for their efforts, which they will receive after the semester is completed. Are you interested? If so, please check the following, and I will contact you:

_____ Yes, I would like to participate in the sub-group and provide a think-aloud protocol as I work, and provide a brief interview after my paper is completed.

Appendix I
Consent Form for All Students

This semester I, Maureen Mathison, am conducting a study for the Center for the Study of Writing, at The University of California, Berkeley, and Carnegie Mellon University. I will be examining students' written critiques of a sociological article, which is one of the assignments for this course, the Sociology of Religion. Each participant in the research study will:

1. Allow the researcher to analyze the critique they write for this class.
2. Allow the researcher to use excerpts from their critique in publications about research with the understanding that their identities will not be revealed at any time.

In return for their participation, each volunteer will receive $5, which will be paid after the semester is completed.

The above information will remain confidential.
It will not be shared with the instructor of the course.
It will have no bearing on course performance or grade.

Toward the end of the semester, I will provide you with an update of the study. When I have completed the project, I will be happy to share the research results with you.

If you are willing to participate in this research, please read and sign the consent form below.

I agree to participate in all the procedures listed above. I understand that my identity will be protected and that the instructor will only see my paper, as it is a class assignment. I also understand that my name will not be revealed when data from the research are presented in publication. I give the researcher permission to use excerpts from what I write without identifying me. If, however, at any time I wish to terminate my participation in the research I have the right to do so without penalty. I further have the right to contact the following person and report my objections, either orally or in writing:

Dr. Paul Christiano
608 Warner Hall
Carnegie Mellon University
Telephone: 268-6685

Name: _____
(please print)

Signature: _____

Local Telephone Number: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Date: _____

Appendix J
Interview Questions for Case-Study Students

1. Take several minutes to review your critique. I am going to replay your tape in which you discuss what parts you believe make your critique stronger and weaker. Please elaborate on your responses.

2. To critique means to _____ (refer to student's task impression). Please elaborate on your response. Point to parts in your text that illustrate what you've been saying about critique.

3. When writing your critique, were there any things that you consciously decided not to do or include in the paper?

4. You state that the purpose in writing your critique was to _____ (refer to student's task impression). Walk me through your critique and explain how you achieved this.

5. You said that writing a critique was a _____ familiar task. What experience have you had that makes that so?

6. What grade do you expect on your critique? Why?

7. You are now a _____ (level in college). If you were to have written this critique when you were a freshman, how might it be different?

8. What role does critique play in the discipline of sociology?

9. What role has writing played in your sociology classes (refer to the questionnaire)?

10. How would you compare the writing sociology students do in their sociology classes with the writing sociologists do? More specifically, how would you compare the writing of critiques by students and by sociologists?

Appendix K
Corresponding Student Critique

In their article, "On the Margins of the Sacred," authors Greil and Rudy examine the phenomenon of organizations that seemingly fit somewhere between the realm of religious and secular in nature. Identifying these organizations as quasi-religions, the authors clearly defined how they have become increasingly acceptable within the spectrum of how Americans "do religion." They further justify how these quasi-religions conform to generally accepted substantive and functional definitions of religion. Yet, while providing legitimate examples of these quasi-religions, they fall short in their interpretation of why these organizations have come to prominence in recent decades and how they have replaced those traditional religious values that are so much a part of the American way of life.

While the authors quote impressive patterns of growth in quasi-religious membership during the 1970's and 80's, they ignore a similar growth witnessed within traditionalist denominations during the same period, particularly those with strong fundamentalist roots, seeded deep in Christian ideologies.

As most of the sampled quasi-religions are essentially variations of self-help or therapeutic groups in nature, the authors have used them to examine how these organizations have used traditional religious concepts as tools to insulate themselves against the advances of modern society, full of science and technology. By limiting their analysis to characteristics designated as "sort of" religious, such as commitment and identity transformation, they ignore how these are some of the most basic structural elements that provide the basis for the religion institution. Furthermore, they ignored the juxtaposition of religion structural relationships between traditional values and a society caught up in the forward movement of modernity.

In an attempt to identify a common link between quasi and conventional religions, the authors have relied on the reader's acceptance of the "sort of" form of thinking laid down in their explanation of the substantive and functional definitions of religions. If these definitions are to be accepted, so then must civil religions and various forms of nationalism be incorporated into the characterization of "sort of" religions, therefore, making this an essential social ingredient that is causal to the general structure of society and to everyone involved within that society, especially the Sociologist. By limiting themselves to the perceptions of individuals, the authors neglect the effectual elements that are the structure of religion. One of the strongest forces within American society, religion it is based within the Christian foundations of the country. It is these same structural elements that allows emergent properties such as quasi-religions to be identified. Yet, the authors have allowed their definition to become tainted by basing their hypothesis on how individual human behavior relates to the concepts of religion.

In closing, I feel that, although the authors have attempted to introduce a logical argument toward their theory of quasi-religions, they have ignored or simplified too many facets of religion relates to the critical function of the society. While is easy to see the deterioration of values and practices within a society, it is all too often blamed on a loss of religion by the citizenry. Yet, as society becomes more technical and complex, there develops a need for institutions to return to the fundamental elements of their core beliefs, therefore allowing an adjustment period to the advances of modernity. The authors are either ignoring this or refusing to accept this basic historic ingredient of the struggle between religions and modernity, and in doing so, they allow one of the strongest components of religion to evade them.

Appendix L
Instructions for Rating Critiques

Students taking a course in the sociology of religion were asked to write *critiques* of approximately 2 typed pages on the article "On the Margins of the Sacred," by Arthur Greil and David Rudy. The assignment required that students "respond to the article and its ideas," providing fresh responses that would serve as a point of departure for class discussion on the topic. Thus, the critiques were written prior to discussion of the Greil and Rudy article. I am asking you to read the Greil and Rudy article and then to rate the critiques in response to the assignment. If you like, you may write commentaries on the critiques themselves.

Step 1
Provide a quality rating of the enclosed 32 essays based upon criteria that you believe is important for students writing a critique in the discipline of sociology. Quality ratings range from 1 to 5. Thus, you will be sorting the critiques into the accompanying folders marked 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. Before you get started sorting the critiques into the folders you should read a few of them to get a sense of the quality before you begin rating them.

After you have read through a few critiques, you can begin sorting them into the folders. The first folder will contain what you consider to be the high quality critiques. The second folder will contain the medium-high quality critiques. The third folder will contain the medium quality critiques. The fourth folder will contain the medium- low critiques. The fifth folder will contain the low quality critiques. While some folders may contain more critiques than others, all folders must contain at least three critiques. There probably will be fewer texts in the high and low folders, with most texts falling within the middle ranges. When you have finished rating, please mark the folder number at the top of each critique, and make sure it is in its appropriate folder.

Step 2
When you are finished with step 1, go back through and find the following critiques coded:

# 82739	# 54580	# 69051
# 60940	# 96927	# 38167
# 81486	# 36759	# 73190

Briefly review these critiques, paying particular attention to parts of the texts that you think make the critiques stronger or weaker. **Mark** the stronger places with a (+) and mark the weaker places with a (--). We will discuss these evaluations in our interview.